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L O R D R O L D A N.

ЛЮДОВІДІЯ

МАНЮСКРИПТ

L O R D R O L D A N,

A R O M A N C E.

BY ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

Loosed to the world's wide range, enjoin'd no aim,
Prescribed no duty, and assign'd no name,
Nature's unbounded son, he stands alone,
His heart unbiass'd and his mind his own.
Strong as necessity, he starts away,
Climbs against wrongs, and brightens into day. SAVAGE.

I N T H R E E V O L U M E S.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N :

JOHN MACRONE, ST. JAMES'S SQUARE.

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WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.

LORD ROLDAN.

CHAPTER I.

When I mount the creepie chair,
Wha will sit beside me there?
Gie me Rab—I'll seek nae mair.

BURNS.

ON a small ross, or promontory, in the bosom of the bay of Glengarnock, on the western coast of Scotland, stand the ruins of a parish kirk. Some roofless houses are near; the burial-ground is filled with ancient gravestones, and the old bell, rung sometimes—and the peasants say mournfully—by the wind, is yet visible on the sole remaining gable. This decay happened through no falling off in devotion: there is still a surplus of piety in the district; but that carnal weed, stipend, failed to increase according to the wants of the pastoral incumbents, and Glengarnock, with its ancient name and traditions of a thousand years, was lost in the neighbouring

parish of Drumdrousie. Though omitted in session records, and dropt out of county enactments, Glengarnock was not forgotten. There is a love which survives death, and upsets acts of parliament: the old families stood resolutely by the old name, and refused too to be buried in other earth than where their ancestors lay; nay, at the present moment the rudest hind regards the old edifice as he passes it with reverence, and at stated times some of the graver people go with their whole household, and perform family worship within the ruined walls. Yet we must not ascribe all this to devotion: the peasant sobers down his mood as he passes the burial-ground after twilight, because he believes it to be haunted; and the old families persist in speaking of Glengarnock, and remembering its past glories, because it helps to humble the pride of the upstart portioners of Drumdrousie.

On the day—and it was a summer one—on which this story commences, the little kirk of Glengarnock wore another look: the roof of gray slate glittered in the sun; the doors were thrown open, while the bell—borrowed at the reformation from the abbey of Dundrennan—intimated to the glens and hills that the sabbath was come, and the hour of public devotion at hand. The place

was lonesome, but not without beauty ; the hills which hemmed it in were green to the summits ; the coming tide was filling all the bay ; the sea-birds were darting on their prey amid the long lines of soughing foam ; two or three vessels of war or merchandise lay with their sails reefed at a distance ; one or two stranded and half-buried skiffs intimated that the roadstead was dangerous ; while the rooks on the firs sat so still, and the birds in the bushes sang so sweet, as showed they were conscious of safety on the sacred day.

The people, too, shared in the calm gladness of the scene : each glen and hill had sent forth its douce and well-dressed inhabitants ; they filled half the little burial-ground, and leaned over the low wall, looking towards the west, seemingly expecting the coming of some one. They could not be waiting for the preacher, for he had already arrived, and was putting on his short Geneva cloak, and arranging the notes of his sermon in the house of one of his elders. The sex, and the business of the person expected were thus announced by one of the eager gazers, Nickie Neevison by name. “ Aye ! ye may look till the een loup out of your heads—she’s no the quean I take her to be if she come here to be made into a parish wonder.” One or two silently

assented to this opinion, and walked into the kirk: those who remained were soon rewarded for their patience.

A whisper arose among the gazers, and all eyes were directed to a young woman, who, screened till now by a succession of broomy knolls, came towards the kirk: she came indeed, but she faltered, nay trembled much, and seemed once or twice about to turn back—she was on an adventure that appeared beyond her strength. When she came near all eyes were cast down, or somewhat averted, and a murmur of pity arose amongst such as nature had not steeled against compassion. She was not more than eighteen years old; her dress, a gray linsey-woolsey, indicated that she belonged to the humbler classes; but her beauty was worthy of any condition, nor was it hurt, but perhaps heightened, by a certain remissness in her apparel, and a trouble in her looks, over which the lily and the rose seemed chasing one another. Her hair, at that time worn very long, was of a glistering brown; and as it escaped in handfuls from beneath her head-gear, she raised fingers, long, white, and round, to shed it back and replace it; while her mantle, one of those soft and delicate “whytes,” for which the district says a

historian was famed in “uncouth realms,” hung a little awry, revealing a handsome form, such as artists dream of oftener than they delineate. As she passed into the kirk she hung her head slightly, looked neither to the right nor to the left, while her large bright hazel eyes had each a teardrop ready to run trembling down her cheeks, over which others, and hot ones too, had lately passed. “I told ye sae, now!” exclaimed Nickie Neevison; “Madame’s come, and she queens it rarely! But I trow Andrew Yorstoun will pull down her pride for her.”

Few of those who filled the burial-ground seemed disposed to speak as harshly as Nickie Neevison: the elder people sighed and shook their heads—they had daughters of their own, and fear made them charitable; while some of the younger and more outspoken disguised their feelings less. One having observed that at any rate Mary Morison had got a fine day to show her folly in, was rebuked by a second. “It’s sure,” said this new authority “to be a bonnie day and bring all the parish out when a modest young thing maun mount and be rebuked: had she been some lightheaded haluket hizzie ye would have had a tearing wind and a drenching rain, so that naebody but the doucest could have witnessed her suf-

fering. I am sorry for the young laird of Howe-boddom: he wooed lang and pled sair, but what maun be will be, there's nae gainsaying of that,"—"It's just the way of a' weel faured lasses," said a third; "they slight the kind and the deserving, and rin a queer road with the rich and the deceitful, and end on the repentance-stool."—"I think," exclaimed a fourth, "that three parishes are emptied upon us this blessed day: look to the sea, behold a batch of sailor lads coming hither with all speed of oars; yet they have erred in every latitude! There's a swarm of threshers and ploughmen hastening down the glen, as if they never saw a sonsie lass that had tint her snood before; and waur than a', yonder's a score of shepherds from the inland hills: I feel already the smell of tar and braksha. I can bide the sight no longer." The bell as these words were uttered ceased ringing and all the people entered the kirk and took their seats.

Mary Morison, for that was the name of the young woman respecting whom all these words have been spoken—Mary Morison had already taken her seat. Now the seat occupied by this rural beauty was, we grieve to say it, no other than the seat of shame—a bad eminence known by the familiar name of "the Creepie" among

rustics, and described in the sessional records as “the repentance-stool.” A witty Scottish bard stigmatized it a hundred years ago in a satire called “Rome’s Legacy to the Kirk of Scotland,” where he exhibits a male transgressor enduring penance in a way at once witty and indecorous. “The Creepie” of Glengarnock kirk projected into the body of the building from a loft or balcony, and being of open Gothic work, the culprit whether male or female, was visible, from head to foot, to all the congregation. The more opulent or more prudent of the transgressors of the female sex usually baffled public curiosity by dropping a large thick veil over head and shoulders; while male sinners, more philosophical or more anxious to make full atonement, stood exposed and bare, and sometimes it is said excited by their deportment a dangerous pity in soft bosoms. Poor Mary Morison was not one of the opulent; she had no veil to drop over charms which had already ruined her own peace: she took her place not without a visible shudder, but that soon subsided and left her with looks as pale and fixed as marble, and a brow where internal strife seemed to have given way to a calm and resolute composure, which enabled her to endure the coming rebuke of the church, the more since

it could not convey a sharper pang to her heart than what she had already suffered.

All eyes were turned upon her, save those of the preacher, who had other follies, if not failings, to deal with, before he touched on the frailty of Mary Morison. He preached a sermon which was a curiosity in its kind ; it was directed against those enormities in female attire which in old testament times awoke the indignation of one of God's prophets, and in latter days induced a venerable divine to declare, that a handsome, well-dressed, rosie woman was a baited hook for Satan. He had all the examples of female vanity by heart : he was aware that one of the bards of the reformation had taken up a rhyming testimony against the flowing trains of the court-ladies ; and that Knox had thundered against the increasing influence of woman, and the unloveliness of love-locks. Now, the parish of this zealous pastor was very poor, and, moreover, lay much out of the way of temptation : there were but three silk gowns in the district, and Lady Roldan was reported to have one of velvet, which descended to her as an heir-loom ; yet out of homely materials the ingenuous preacher contrived to raise up a strong rampart against modesty and virtue. He condemned all slippers that were low at the instep ; all gowns,

whether silk or linsey-woolsey, which showed too much below, and concealed too little above; all locks which were curled, by nature or otherwise, and polished busks and jimp bodice, he regarded as matters calculated to make ladies lose their balance, and become like the young woman before them, candidates for the repentance-stool. "Some of us," muttered Nickie Neevison, "are safe enough in ony thing; I shall wear silk when I can get it, and satin too—were it but to vex him the mair!"

Not a few of the hearers grew weary of a sermon which it had been their fortune to hear delivered, as one troubled with a particular memory declared, for the seven-and-twentieth time in six-and-twenty years. One began to think of his standing corn, and how it was prospering in the sunshine: another entered into a calculation of the lambs on his hills, and failed not to express a hope that they would be worth three half-crowns apiece by the lamb fair of Lockerby; a third—he was a miser—read the various sums written in golden letters on the wall, "mortified," as it is called, for the good of the poor of the parish, by charitable wanderers who thought of their native place in a far land; a fourth—he knew a fat haggis was ready to a popple at home—eyed the

sunbeam as it crept, snail-like, along the wall, and thought that Sol's westering wheels required greasing; while a fifth fixed his eyes on the grotesque figures which, like those carved on Gothic corbels, supported on their backs the burden of the seat which held Mary Morison.

This seat was in truth a rare piece of workmanship, and once occupied a place among other fantastic sculpturings in the old Abbey of Sweetheart: the architect of the kirk stole what he could not otherwise produce, and caused a group which had served antichrist to do duty for the reformed church. This required tact, and it was not wanting. No sooner had the artist given the finishing touch to the new repentance-stool, than a hue and cry arose that Rome had a hand in the undertaking, and that one of her reliques was polluting the reformed kirk of Glengarnock. A stern divine of the district went and looked at and handled the group, then summoned the artist and demanded an explanation. "Here," said he, "is carved a fair plump woman: a figure with an evil mien seems to have hold of her; but how, or where, I cannot well say, seeing that part of her is covered with a mantle: while here are two spirits—black or white—according as we may fancy, for they are of wood, which appear to be

bestowing nurture and admonition on the woman in a manner more picturesque than polite."

" You have described it truly," replied the artist—" it is not what it seems—it is symbolical. The woman plump and fair is her of Babylon ; the figure of evil mien which holds her up in secret is Superstition ; and the two bright shapes —they are bright, for their faces and hands are gilt—are Knox and Calvin scourging the abominations of Rome." The artist prevailed ; but had the original meaning of the group been given, this relique of popery had found its way to the fire.

From these and other reveries the hearers were suddenly recalled : the preacher, whose voice had hitherto maintained a sort of swelling sound of a lulling influence, dropped all at once from a high cold strain of laborious invective, and in a tone very low, very distinct, and very moving, took up the subject matter of transgression. Succeeding events caused every word he uttered to be recalled and remembered : nor were they many, nor elegant, nor weighty ; but time, place, and circumstances hallow ordinary things, and give a sublimity to expressions in themselves simple.

" Young woman," said the preacher, " I will not name you, for your name was given for high

things; and for all that has happened it will be pronounced with honour in the land when these gray-hairs of mine—ay, and these bright ones of thine—are mingled in the dust. I shall not therefore couple it with the sin which has brought you before the servant of the Lord this day. I leave it as a wad or pledge to be redeemed by virtue. Neither shall I name the sin, nor descant upon it as some of my brethren are apt to do: it is a word that may not be spoken, and the evil eminence which you now occupy sufficiently indicates it. But, oh ! woman, this is a sad descent from the bright station which till now you have held ; my eyes were upon you from the time you were an hour old, for I watch over my people. I signed the sign of the Redeemer's cross on thy little brow—even then it was bright ;—I saw you grow up the fairest of the flowers in this little garden of my master's, and not more fair than bright ; for in wit and quickness of mind, who is there that has excelled thee ? Your father died—nay, be not troubled at that—he was spared this humiliation of his hopes and home ;—your mother died—I am glad you are more composed when I name her—for, oh ! how grateful you ought to be to God, that she is in the kirkyard and not in the congregation.”

The preacher paused for a little space ; the people looked alternately at the pulpit and the repentance-stool ; nor were they unmoved to see tears in both places. He thus continued his admonition : “ Thou wert thus left fatherless and motherless, and the voice of God seemed to say to all, ‘ She is as a lamb on the mountains : see how desolate she is !—it is the duty of all who love virtue and loveliness to watch over her—she is an orphan, and has no father to take her part,—no brother to be bold in a sister’s cause.’ But there came one who saw thou wert lovely, and desired thee ; who saw that thou wert unprotected, and that he might spread a snare for thee in safety ;—one who had dallied with the plumed and painted madams of Edinburgh and London, and saw thou wert vain as, alas ! beauty ever is ; and with his wit, his wealth, his title, and his talents, set about with all the eloquence of a bright spirit, and the feelings of a dark one, to ensnare and undo thee. How he succeeded, let thy present seat testify. He is not one of us : on him the light of the reformation has in vain been shed, and he belongs to a fold of which the keeper believes himself infallible, and a god. Were he one of us, he should this day have heard truths such as none of his gay comrades dare tell him : words—were he not

as deaf as is the adder, of which he is a type—more piercing than arrows, and hotter than the cinders of Tophet."

As the preacher uttered these words, the sound of a horse's hoofs was heard at the entrance of the kirk, and the jingling of the chains and spurs of a rider, as he dismounted. In a moment a handsome, nay, noble-looking, young man, advanced up the central aisle; he threw his cloak from about him, folded his arms, and pausing where the seats commenced, said, in a voice which had a touch of scorn in it, "I am here; and not so deaf as is the adder. What have you to say to me?"

The first feeling of the people was astonishment and horror at this intrusion; the next was to seize him, and thrust him with ignominy out of the church into which he pushed himself, as it seemed, to browbeat and insult. The preacher saw this at a glance, and exclaimed with a voice which even made the intruder start,—"Touch him not, my people, I command you: he comes not unsent—scarcely unexpected; conduct him to a seat." This was addressed to the elders—one of whom, an old sedate man, still remembered in the vale by the name of King Corrie, from a certain sovereignty of manner which he assumed among the hinds and mechanics, advanced up to

this unwelcome visiter ; opened the door which led to the seat of shame, and motioned him to ascend, with a look in which there was as much sarcastic sourness as charity. When the door jarred, Mary Morison, who amid all this scene had displayed a wondrous composure, seemed ready to sink where she stood : she looked below, and she looked to the pulpit ; shed back her ringlets with her hand from her moistened face, and, by a sudden effort, regained her self-command—an effort equal to her whole firmness of mind and nerve. The finger of the preacher, and the hand of another of the elders, provided a seat in which this intruder would not be considered as a culprit ; but he refused to be seated, and still with folded arms repeated his first interrogatory, “ I am here ; what have you to say to me ? ”

Andrew Yorstoun eyed him for a moment, and leaning over his arms on the pulpit, said, “ I have nothing now to say to thee, Lord Roldan ; because I see from thy behaviour here thou art beyond reproof, and unworthy of having the rebuke of the church breathed against thee. I see in thee the last of a long line of valiant men, who often warred worthily for their country, and of all thy house there is but one whom I dare call coward, and he stands before me. Nay,

put not thy hand to thy side ; I know thou hast a sword, and can use it with skill ; but brute boldness is not bravery, any more than this pitiful bravado of thine to-day is courage. Who, of all thy noble ancestors—and some of them were not scrupulous—would have wrought such wreck of innocence and beauty, and then ventured into the house of God to glory in the wickedness ? Not one ! Not even Lord Gerald, the most sinful of all thy line—he who spilt the blood of saints like water upon the mountains, and smote God's servant with his steel gauntlet till the blood burst over his bible—even he, whom profane men called Hell-let-loose, were he let loose from hell to-day, would blush for thee, and say thou hadst disgraced him.”

“ Of me say what thou wilt,” said Lord Roldan, not unmoved. “ But, old man, say nothing of my sires save what a son may hear. Go on.”

“ I think the minister,” whispered King Corrie to a brother elder, “ is the braver man of the twa. What a capital hand he would have been in the days of the Covenant, when men took to the hill-side with broadsword and bible, and found use for them baith.”

“ Whisht, John,” whispered the other ; “ and

hearken to the minister. Ye'll see him just now send this young whelp of Babylon howling home to his mother as if the fiend had spilt a ladleful of melted brimstone on him. There it comes!"

"Then of thee alone will I speak, and speak to thy understanding," said the preacher: "and, godless as thou art, think not to remain unmoved. Close your bibles, my people, and shut your ears if such seems good, for your minister is to speak of carnal and worldly things." As he said this, he descended from the pulpit, advanced to Lord Roldan, took him by the hand, led him to a window, and said, "Look out there, and say what you see. You see the green hills and dales of Glengarnock: are they not beautiful? They once called the lords of Roldan master; ay! and hills and dales more fertile still, beyond them, told the same tale. They are passed and gone from thy house, and strange names have sprung up in the land, and hold rule, and administer the law. Was it the strong hand and the sharp sword; think ye, which achieved this? No! For who was there in all the north border more skilful to lead, or more brave in fight, than were the men of thy name? Their lands and their rule passed from them, not from want of strength, but through lack of virtue: they sinned, and

God bereaved them of their wisdom, and they became blind, and took the road to ruin and called it the road to honour. See ! there is a streak of sunshine even now on the tower of thy fathers ! I accept that as a symbol that hope has not yet forsaken thy house. It is in thy power to redeem thy name from ruin, and replace it among the worthies of the land; it may be done by one noble act: must I say what that act is?"

"I am no reader of riddles," said Lord Roldan, "nor solver of mysteries—speak, and speak plainly."

"I mean so, and not otherwise," said the preacher. "Hast thou the courage to look around thee? There is a woman among my people whom thou hast grievously wronged: go, take her by the hand, and bid the church give her with its blessing to thy bosom."

Lord Roldan stepped some space back; his eyes lightened more with amazement than anger. "Sir Preacher," he answered, "you are not so ignorant of both your bible and the world, as not to know that I cannot unite with my own menial without degrading my rank, and stepping voluntarily down from a station ten centuries old."

"I know," replied the other, "that we all are God's creatures, made in his own likeness; and

fair, and beautiful, and brave, and wise, and imaginative, according to his good pleasure in bestowing his gifts. These are personal merits, and cannot be made heritable like the vales of Glen-garnock. I have nowhere learned from inspired writ, that God has forbid love and marriage between a young and well-mated pair—because, forsooth, the one was by accident a lord, and the other by accident a simple maiden. Go to—find me a worthier reason, for all are equal in the sight of Heaven.”

“ It is enough,” replied Lord Roldan, colouring; “ and must satisfy all who take upon themselves the risk of inquiring into my private affairs, that I wed no one below my degree.—Are you answered ?”

“ No, man of folly and pride, I am not answered,” said the preacher. “ I laugh at such fantastic reasons, and you must find better when you answer for your conduct at the bar of the Most High. I am not answered, and I tell thee in the presence of God, and in the hearing of man, that the creature whom thou hast ensnared and deserted might be lady to the best that ever ruled in thy house, and therefore thou art no more worthy of her than the reptile is of the damask rose into whose blossom it has crawled.”

The hot and impetuous youth seemed inclined at first to offer personal violence to his stern and inflexible monitor : but, if the intention existed at all, it was but for a moment. He drew himself haughtily up, bowed slightly to the preacher and to the people, and withdrew as suddenly as he came, leaving the whole audience amazed at his audacity.

“It is weel for himself that he is gone,” groaned an old woman. “Had he tarried a moment longer all the bibles in the kirk would have been thrown at his presumptuous face. He is a handsome youth ; but the devil takes some pains in the fashioning of his snares.”

While this was passing, the precentor lifted up his voice and began to sing the eighth psalm. All the people joined ; first, because they were accustomed to follow when he led ; secondly, the psalm itself was a great favourite from its poetic beauty ; and, thirdly, not a few felt that the scene was indecorous, though they had a full belief that their pastor would triumph, nay, perhaps, prevail on the young lord to wed one more than worthy of him. At a sign from the preacher the singing ceased ; at a second sign, the seat of shame was vacated, never to be occupied again, for on the morrow it was missed

in its place, and all the women cried out, “The church of Rome has claimed its own ;” and at a third sign, all the people rose, received the blessing of their pastor, and left the church to seek their own glens and respective habitations.

From the talk among the people on their way home enough was said respecting the leading personages in this little drama to enable me to introduce them to the reader at full length. The Lord Roldan, of whose wild feelings and unsober deportment some display has already been made, belonged to a long line of nobles, whose fame reaching back beyond the days of the Bruce and the Wallace, suffered a sad eclipse by the change of religion, and of kings—never to speak of a rebellion or two in which the lords of Roldan, estate as well as persons, were engaged. They had maintained a sort of stormy independence against the overshadowing houses of Douglas and Maxwell—nay, they had once or twice raised their banner against their own liege lords, and submitted not without blows. A long train of misfortune crushed their strength and curtailed their patrimony; they unfortunately took the unlucky side in all national disputes, from the day that Knox contended for the light at St. Andrew’s down to the day on which the field of

Culloden was stricken. The reformado saints of the congregation pronounced that one of their best estates was church property, and gave it to one who eschewed evil according to the tenets of Calvin : they lost the east wing of their domains by siding with Charles Stuart against Oliver Cromwell, and thought to win it back by joining in one of the many plots hatched under the second Charles ; but instead of that the west wing went. The main body of their property was invaded and the title endangered by the share which they took in the rising of the Earl of Mar, and they were only saved from risking the remainder in the year 1745 by the subtle boldness of Roger Morison, grandfather of the unfortunate Mary of our tale ; who, under pretence of selecting arms, enticed the Lord Roldan of the day into the dungeon of his own castle, and held him under custody till Prince Charles and his men were passed and gone.

This piece of service, which might have procured Roger Morison a halter instead of thanks had the rebellion succeeded, was rewarded after the fatal day of Culloden by a benefaction to him and his heirs for ever of the Elfin-glen, a piece of ground more poetic than productive, and the house that stood in it and which he then occupied. From

that till the present time the story of the Roldans may be briefly told: they hunted, they travelled, they gamed, and they squandered, till the estate was deeply sunk by the load of its debt, and all that remained to the family was a massive castle too large by one half for a household such as theirs, and a rental of some three thousand a year: while all that remained of the family was the dowager lady Roldan, a pious person, and as the peasants said, as proud as Lucifer: Lord Roldan, her eldest son whom we have already introduced, and Lord Thomas, her second son, now wandering abroad, banished, it is said, by the pride of his mother, because of his attachment to a young lady of a heretical house. Of Mary Morison, who for the present must be our heroine, it is only necessary to say, that she was left an orphan to inherit the Elfin-glen when some fifteen years old, and that faith in promises and belief in vows, had brought her into that state of humiliation which we have endeavoured to draw.

When the congregation of Glengarnock separated, a large portion sought their way to the glens which might be seen at a distance, each with its own particular stream and thin blue smoke ascending above the farmsteads and cottages, bosomed or buried in the sheltered nooks

and antique woods. The people were divided into some half-dozen groups, and each group discussed the conduct of the young Lord Roldan, the deportment of Mary Morison, and the eloquence of the preacher. The opinions were very various.

“ It’s a fine thing,” cried Nickie Neevison, whose tongue was ever in the van—“ it’s a fine thing, I say, to be weel-favoured. Madam there, where she takes the road before us, may thank her curling locks and bright een for the escape she made: my certie! the minister advertised her talents and looks: he was harder on us decent and faultless folk, for a feather by ordinary in our head and a flounce more than common in our gown, than he was on madam for doing what he would na name, poor bird-mouthed body, as if we didnae all know what he meant. Such gentleness is a premium to folly: I’ll answer for naebody after this.”

A milder voice took up the subject.—“ We must consider,” said Jeanie Rabson, “ that beauty is a temptation, and speak mildly of the errors of loveliness. See how busy the bees and wasps are about this new-blossomed and scented flower, while not one of them will touch that common weed.”

“ Ye speak touchingly, my dear sister,” said James Rabson, the laird of Howeboddom; “ and when did ye speak otherwise? But will none of you accompany yonder unhappy thing hame?—she has dred a terrible weird this day, and may need in her lonesome home some who can both think and speak.”

“ And act too, laird,” said Nickie Neevison. “ But, 'las anee! I cannot go: I lack experience in her needs, ye ken; but she can get Marion Johnstone, a sure hand—mony's the ill-faured face which she has introduced to daylight; and, better still, there's Girzie Haffie, whom folk call Nipneck—she nippit the neck of Sarah Steenson's bairn—and what she did ance she may do again. But what mad rider's this!—if here is nae the young lord himself! If he has heard what I said of him to-day, he'll never stop his horse and talk wi' me as I come hame frae the market again.”

Ere she had done speaking, Lord Roldan was among them: he reined in his horse, and touching him gently with the spur, and curbing him sharply with a hard-bitted bridle, restrained him in his paces. He had perhaps some doubts of the propriety of his behaviour in the church, and took

this opportunity of learning the public opinion. He was not kept long in the dark.

“ I wish ye joy of your judgment, Lord Roldan,” said Nickie Neevison. “ Ye have made a grand exhibition of yourself! There’s nought like yon in all Will Shakspeare—na, nor Davie Lindsay neither. And on the Lord’s-day, too!—but the better day the better deed.”

“ So then, Miss Neevison,” said his lordship, with a smile, “ you approve of my exhibition, as you call it, and think it dramatic? ”

“ Truly do I, my lord,” said the ready Nickie. “ All the acts of your house are nought compared wi’t. Let me see—Lord Robert threw away the mains of Plumdamas at a cast of the dice; Lord William sold the estate of Cummercraft, and thrawall the gold it brought into the lap of his fause leman, Effie Macnab; Lord Roland, your ain grandsire, threw away land and rent for the sake of the devil, the pope, and the pretender.—Na, na, the best of them canna hold a candle to you; they could but build the wall, your lordship has laid on the capestane! ”

The young lord, so far from looking offended with this freedom, seemed to enjoy it much; he smiled as Nickie proceeded with the muster-roll of

follies in his family, and laughed outright when she gave the precedence to his own misdeeds. This did not fail to make an impression on his audience, who branching off, one by one, from the main way, to their various homesteads, could not help glancing back to get another glimpse of him. His look, and shape, and air merited all this: he sat his horse with a grace which intimated the saddle to be his familiar seat; his jacket of sea-green velvet, with gold buttons; his short cloak lined with the richest silk, and fastened at the neck with clasps studded with Solway pearls; the elegant unity of his form; the proud expression of his large dark eyes; the haughty curl of his lip; and an air of nobleness which, like sap in the tree, was diffused over the whole man; together with his youth—bespoke favour, and won respect. Having made this favourable impression, he suddenly touched his hat, put spurs to his horse, and galloped forward, and disappeared in the groves which sheltered but did not conceal the castle of his fathers.

“Weel, they are queer deevils, these gentles, after a’,” said a shepherd from the neighbouring hills—“the young lord smiled, and yet bit his lips till the blood sprang; he looked gladsome,

and yet he spurred and curbed his poor horse without reason ; and did ye no see, when he laughed outright, how he gave my lady's spaniel such a whack wi' his whip as sent it limping on three legs for the next half-mile ? ”

On the young laird of Howeboddom and his sister, the pleasant words and agreeable person of Lord Roldan made no impression : they shrunk from him, and regarded him with looks such as we cast on some shining reptile brought from climes nearer the sun, and exhibited in our cold isle, where a viper or a snake is almost a wonder. On reaching their own threshold, they paused and hesitated : “ Shall I go in, James ? ” said Jeanie.

“ As you like,” said the brother. She, however, entered not; but looking earnestly in his face, turned round, and said, more with her eyes than with her lips, “ Shall I go to her, James ? ”

“ Do so, Jeanie—my ain Jeanie,” he replied, and hurried into the house. To what these words led must be reserved for the second chapter of this “ owre true tale.”

CHAPTER II.

The kimmer keekit in his loof;
 Quo' she, wha lives will see the proof,
 This waly boy will be nae coof.

BURNS.

THE Elfin-glen, to which we must now request the company of our readers, was then in its summer beauty: it was, in truth, a ravine rather than a vale; and was formed by a little stream, which in dry seasons trickled rather than flowed; but in winter, when rains fell heavy on the hills, came down red and foaming, letting its moorland tongue be heard audibly in the land. The continual running of many centuries—armed, too, with rocks and stones when in flood—had enabled the Elfin burn to eat its way for a hundred feet and more down into the solid but soft sandstone: the eddying of the water, as it tried to force its way, had formed a channel sufficiently winding and fantastic; while here and there a large round whinstone, refusing to move further, till admonished, perhaps, by a thunder-plump, allowed itself

to be whirled round and round, till an immense circular basin was formed, filled with the purest water and the finest trout ; in the centre of which it lay smooth and polished, contrasting curiously with the rock around.

The first leap of the burn might be some forty feet, which it performed out of a bed of heather ; the second was about the same height, but pausing in its way, shaped out many little chambers and caverned galleries in the sides, till performing its third and last leap within a few hundred yards of the Elfin-cottage, it ran the rest of its journey smooth, and placid, and pure ; no more resembling the little turbulent brook which we have described, than a maiden sleeping on a bed of lilies resembles a tragic queen in a drama, with her hair floating, her eyes flashing, and her hands on the dagger or the bowl.

The little glen was in its summer livery : the hazels were green, the honeysuckles abundant ; at the bell of each foxglove a wild bee hung ; while the stream, as clear as the sky which overhung it, was scarcely heard as it lingered among the pebbles of its bed and the clustering bushes of its banks. But among none of its flowers did the feet of Jeanie Rabson linger, nor on any of its beauties did her eyes for a moment dwell : with nimble

feet, and an eye which challenged every object, and an ear that questioned every sound, she hastened to the Elfin-cottage.

Jeanie and Mary had been school comrades, and were endeared to each other by ties of many kinds and colours. The former had the advantage in years, and in a certain sedateness of judgment; but in all other matters the latter was superior. To Mary no task was ever hard, and no difficulty difficult: at school she mastered all her lessons with such rapidity, that she found leisure to aid Jeanie, and thus kept her close to her in the classes, nor did she ever seem to labour: hers was so happy a readiness that she had always leisure for her little garden, into which she introduced many curious and rare flowers; always time for play among the rocks and trees of the glen when her companions desired it. But better than all in the sight of her friends, she never presumed on the merit of her natural endowments; neither as she grew up did she give herself those airs which inform us that the exhibiter is not only aware of her beauty, but is resolved to have it acknowledged.

All these and other qualities were present to the mind of Jeanie as she approached the little

lonesome dwelling of her friend. The door was open; a fire glimmered on the hearth; a table stood on the floor, and upon it were placed some handfuls of berries gathered from the glen, together with new milk, and butter. All was clean, neat, and even elegant; but no living creature was to be seen, save the cat which purred on the hearth, and the thrush which sung at the window.

Jeanie listened: she heard no one breathing; she looked at the bed, it was smooth and fair; she cried, "Mary," with a voice at first low, and then louder, but no one answered. She went hastily out, looked into a small plot of ground, fenced on one side by the perpendicular rock, and on the other by the Elfin burn, but Mary was not there: two hives of bees were at work; and the red rose and sweet-william afforded them food, except when they chose to seek the heather-bell at the top of the glen, or the honeysuckle in its bosom. She glanced at the low rustic seat in which she had often sat with Mary, plaiting garlands of wild flowers, and singing songs such as the lads of the district wrote: she looked at the sunward bank of mingled thyme and lilies, where they sometimes sat together listening to the song of the linnet or

the thrush, or the ~~laverock~~ high in the air ; or, scarcely less melodious—the music of the stream glittering and gliding by. No one was there. “Then she is in the Elfin-cave,” Jeanie muttered to herself ; and hastening along the narrow margin of the burn, she sought and soon reached this romantic nook.

The Elfin-cave was a natural chamber in the solid rock ; but man had lent his helping hand, and fashioned a very handsome room, or rather gallery, on the sides of which were seats and tables ; nay, a rude couch had been shaped, and tradition readily added that it was once the retreat of a lord of Roldan, who desired to do penance for some offence, real or imaginary, and becoming an anchoret, did good far and near, and even wrought miracles. As one of those miracles was the cure of the moor-ill among the cattle of the neighbouring uplands, we may at least allow him the merit of some medical skill.

The cavern was roomy ; the entrance low and narrow, cut so for protection no doubt in times of feud or invasion, for the approach was very intricate, admitting but one at a time, while it was fully commanded from the interior, so that those who approached were completely at the mercy of

those within. A pure spring, welled up inside, a spring never frozen by winter's cold nor diminished by summer's heat; and that nought might be wanting to render this place of refuge secure, the country traditions gave it an underground connexion with the castle of Roldan—or the remains of the ancient wilderness which still fringed the vale where the castle stood—but with which of those places the Elfin-cave communicated, rumour refused to decide.

When Jeanie entered the cave, she heard a voice, soft and low, as of one praying rather than speaking: she rejoiced at this, for she knew it was Mary; and, advancing slowly, found her kneeling on the floor. Her hair was untied, and flowing out like a stream around, while her forehead was touching the cold rough stone. What confession she made, or what was the nature of the covenant which she entered into with her own heart, was never known, unless it might be guessed from her after course of life. She rose when she had done, and gazing on her friend, said sharply, “Why come ye here? Is it to look upon the fallen, and the trampled on, and betrayed—is it to hearken me in the cleansing of my soul, that ye may tell the world that Mary

Morison has made ~~rows~~ which she will not, cannot keep?—But no, no," she continued, in a choking tone, " Jeanie Rabson cannot do that—no, not if an angel bade her ; her heart is too good and too pure."

Jeanie took her in her arms, both from fear that she might fall, and from love to her. " Mary," she said, as she placed her on a bench of stone, and sat down beside her ; " Mary, ye ken I never had muckle to say, but I winna forsake ye ; aye ! and there's another that I winna name, wha thinks as I think, and will do as I do."

It was not the words, though they were of good cheer and sincere ones, which restored the composure and firmness to Mary's mind ; it was the solemn covenant which she had made with her Creator, and which she looked less to for respect on earth than she hoped happiness from hereafter. She turned her face to her friend, and said, " Jeanie, the sore trial is over ; to look the congregation of the Lord in the face was what I greatly dreaded ; I prayed for strength and for composure, and though both were not wholly granted, yet more than I merited was given. But oh ! to think that he should come, like a raven to a dovecote, to triumph in my shame, and to insult God's

minister at his altar. I tell ye Jeanie—but what are ye going to say? I see ye have something to tell me."

" I was just going to say," replied the other, " that I know not what Lord Roldan came for; he thought muckle about ye, weel I wot, else he wouldna been there; but what his real errand was lies between God and his own conscience. He was gaye roughly handled, at ony rate; and I wish he had been mildly dealt with, for wha kens what he wanted to do?"

" Speak plainer, Jeanie Rabson, speak plainer. I can endure to hear the worst," said Mary, though a flush, which restored the bloom to her cheek and the brightness to her eye, intimated that a vision, not of darkness but of light, was passing before her.

" To speak plain, then," said Jeanie, " I canna see what could have brought him, save to stand before God and man and say that Mary Morison was his wedded wife—was Lady Roldan. And I can tell ye mair; mony a ne thought wi' the minister that a better, or a bonnier never sat in the halls of Roldan. But, gude guide me! what ails ye now? Ye were rosie enough no half a minute syne."

The allusion which had been made was too

much for Mary, she fainted where she sat, and though Jeanie fanned her bosom and applied water from the spring to her temples and brow, she was so long in returning to life that she seemed gone for ever. 'Oh ! that I had some one here,' Jeanie audibly prayed, 'that could but help me to the cavern-mouth with this poor sufferer—ae mouthful of the sunny air of heaven wad bring back the breath that, if not departed, is departing. Oh ! is there no ane of all the sabbath-breakers and idlers can come here and do but ae good deed in their life ?'

It seemed as if her prayer was about to be answered ; she was startled with the sound, not from the entrance but from the very bowels of the rock, of some one approaching.

"There's nae road that way to upper air," muttered Jeanie ; "but whether of the world above or of the world below I shall be thankful for its help."

"I am of both worlds," said a female voice from the inmost recesses of the cavern, and at the same moment the well-known figure of Nanse Halberson was presented to the dubious looks of Jeanie. "Ah, Jean Rabson, is this you ? I I did not think any one would have been before me in a matter of this kind. I jaloused Mary

would be here, and so I came rather a roundabout road that I might not disturb her. But she will be out of her faint soon, and then we can make up our minds to the whole matter.—That's my bonnie woman, move the other hand too. That will do finely.—She begins to open her eyes. I wish we had her out of this wild place ; for, though fit enough to fley folk in—I think, Jean, my coming scared ye—it's no just fit for a lady's chamber, in which her bower-women hope to make her lighter.”

As she said this Mary Morison sat upright, shed back her disordered tresses, and looked on Jeanie and on Nanse, but said not a word.

Nanse had no desire to be silent ; it was, perhaps, as much from a wish to keep the mind of Mary from reflecting on her sad situation, as from a natural turn for talking, that she now launched out : “ Weel, Mary, lass, the hour that brought you a friend has made me a confirmed witch. Ask Jean Rabson there what she thinks of me now ; she has heard of me flying through the air on a kale-stock ; milking the kye of Drumcoltrum parks while sitting at my ain fireside ; nay, was it not her own brother James, a douce lad, and ane that had an ee to you, Mary,

that shot at me in the shape of a hare last Hallow-eve was a twelvemonth, and hunted me with his two hounds till I was fain to turn into a moorhen, and fly for my life? But what's a' that compared to my coming through the freestone of Elfin-glen just at the moment I was wanted, and who kens but that I was on my way to Locherbrigg-hill, when I heard the wish uttered? Word was brought me by a sure hand, and the servant mauna be slack when the master calls."

"Nanse, Nanse," said Jeanie, "the master whom by public report you serve, could have no desire that you should go on an errand of mercy—that ye should do a deed such as would help to save your soul."

"And wherefore no?" said Nanse. "What pleasure could Satan—since it's of him ye speak—have in hauling the soul of a poor auld feckless wife like me through the lowing cauldrons of his dread abode?"

Jeanie stared at her, for she was little accustomed to such latitude of expression. "Nanse, woman," she said, "remember what day of the week it is on; and think, too, that Mary has dreed an awful sederunt to-day, and mayna just like to hear sic words. I winna say ye are cannie or uncannie, or that I either dread or fear

ye ; but, come frae what cause it will, ye hae helped me and relieved me in my hard mister and weirscales, and when ye are next our way, if ye will just ask for me at Howeboddom, I'll not only tie up a' the dogs, but I'll gie ye something home wi' ye that will keep ye cheerie in the winter hours, and James shall carry it to yere ain door-stane ; only ye mauna bid him come in."

" There spoke all the parish of Glengarnock in one voice," said Nanse. " They will see things in a queer and perverse light. It's their pleasure to think me uncannie and to call me witch. One gives me meal, a second malt, a third butter, while a fourth says, ' Nanse, if ye'll no shake our bear and spoil our milkness, I'll send ye a ewe-milk cheese the morn.' If the folk of Glengarnock invest me with powers which dinna pertain to me, am I to be a fool and refuse the honour. Na, na, Jean, lass, there's nae drowning stakes and toom tar-barrels now ; the warst word I hear is witch, and the warst deed that's done to me is hunting my gib-cat and pouing my plums ; sae I think I'll e'en continue to enjoy the revenue that arises from fear, it's a surer one than that which comes from love."

Mary had now arisen, and was standing at the entrance of the cavern during the col-

loquy which we have related. “ Nanse, come here,” she said, “ and come Jeanie, I hear such a sough and sound, as I never before heard ; there’s something strange about to be wrought in the elements.”

Nanse went to the mouth of the cavern and looked up and looked down, and then laid her ear to the rock and listened. “ We are owre lang here,” she exclaimed ; “ it is the sough of the linn and denotes a storm—see if there is na a huge cloud as dark and grim as death sailing to the hill-tops ; there’s a Solway-sea of water in its womb, and when it opens, down will come the Elfin burn raging amid its linns, like a hundred devils—let us hame lasses. I mind well the simmer spate of the year of grace sixty and six ; a brook that might have gushed through a lady’s bracelet at noon would have floated a revenue cutter before night : a weaver was drowned at his loom, and a hawk in her nest in the Elfin linn. Listen to the sough again : it is the voice of God among the cliffs, crying to man to take care of himself ; see if the wee black water pyat is nae quitting the very pool where it had its nest and seeking the topmost towering cliff as a place of safety.” So saying, she took Mary by the hand, and descending the abrupt path which led from the cavern sought the Elfin-cottage, and stirring

up the fire and seating herself on the long settle, composed herself like one disposed to become a guest.

To Jeanie who had come to remain all night this was not unwelcome, neither was it otherwise to Mary, who shaken by the misery of the day seemed anxious for the repose of evening, yet felt that night which now descended had not brought the cure and relief which she looked for. The sound of the stream grew more and more audible: clouds filled all the space between the earth and the sky, and the wind which hitherto would not have shaken the leaf of the linn, rose high and sung in the lonely tree-tops and moaned in the Elfin-cavern with a voice which but for its loudness might have passed for human. Apprehensions of the approaching storm were visible in Jeanie's face, she grew pale and anxious; it was otherwise with Nanse, who seemed not to dread but to enjoy it: she went to the door, nay round the house, and as she went was heard to mutter, "Aye! a' right and tight; the wind canna tirl't nor the spate reach it, and if it pleases God to keep his forked lightning from it, we shall all see his blessed daylight again."

"She's a fearfu' person," muttered Jeanie, "and kens mair than she ought to ken, but I hae nae occasion to mope and mell wi' her. I'll

speak her fair, however, for I shouldna like to have our steading stript wi' ane o' her whirlwinds."

"Mary, my bonnie woman," inquired Nanse, "are ye the worse, think ye, of the sad kemping ye got in the kirk, and d'ye feel ony pain frae the fainting-fit in the Elfin-cavern? The minister's tongue's no quite so musical as a lady's lute, nor was the couch o' stane a bank of violets."

Mary moved her hands as if she implored silence, and said in a low tone, "If I am suffering I have but myself to blame for it; the worst word to me in the kirk to-day was but owre gude, and the hardest spot in the Elfin-cave softer than I deserved."

"Hout tout, my bonnie lass," said Nanse in a soothing tone, "ye're no half so bad as ye think; and as for those who were witnesses of yere shame to-day, there's some of them I could name, who ought to have hid their faces. Ye needna glowre at me, Jean, we a' ken that Ephraim Rabson's daughter, though no sae bonnie as she might have been, and she's gaye and weel that way too, has walked pure and upright; but as for Kate Kissock of Foulflesh—I saw her gae by wi' three feathers in her tappen, and Jenny Jamieson of Wala-waas: and—but why should I talk of folly on a night like this? Only hear at the wind how it

comes raving down the linn, if it gets na drink it will gae wild, and then what will come o' the faulded lambs on Glengarnock hills, and the poor feckless birds in bush and bower? We sit warm and cozie within biggit waas, and never think o' the bits o' feathered handy wark o' God, how they maun bide the bensil."

"She canna be a witch and feel as she says," thought Jeanie to herself, and she moved her seat closer to that of Nanse, and gave her fears to the wind.

It was now well advanced in the night; not a drop of rain had fallen, and the wind, which in angry and lengthened gusts had shaken the trees like wands, dropped down so low as scarcely to be audible. "Is it possible," Nanse muttered to herself, "that the thing is to pass away like a dream; that all the signs and tokens of the earth and air are to be like auld wives' clashes? But that canna be. There never was a bairn born to that house—a lad bairn, especially—that had nae thae dread accompaniments. I maun be prepared." So saying, she produced a small walise, or large pocket, and from the interior of it fished up, first, two or three little thick round cakes; secondly, some white sugar, split neatly into small bits; thirdly, some hyssop, cut and

chopped ; fourthly, some dried flesh of hare ; and fifthly, a neat cup and saucer, of an antique shape, with flowers varnished into the material. These she placed on the table, one by one.

“ Nanse,” said Mary, “ my home is humble, and my wealth is small, but I have aye something in the cupboard to maintain the mense of the house. But I see ye put trust in naebody.”

“ ‘Deed my bonnie lady,’ said Nanse, “ ye are far mistaen in me, as the ballad says ; I put trust in every one, but I darena put trust in myself ; I am a wanderer—whiles I’m on yonder hill-top—whiles in some broomy hollow, and whiles I’m on the cauld open moorland, wi’ no a creature near me but the moorhen and the whaup. Sae I even carry the materials of life with me ; but these whilk I have produced now are no the common stuff that life’s made of ; they were selected with care and with knowledge, to be used when the hour comes—and I think it’s e’en coming now.”

While she was yet speaking, large drops plashed on the roof ; a gust of wind came which seemed bent on rooting out bush as well as tree from the glen, while a gleam of lightning rendered sea and land alike visible, accompanied, rather than followed, by a clap of thunder, that

seemed to run in the veins of the solid earth as well as through the air.

“ There ! ” said Nanse, as she returned from depositing the iron crook and tongs on the outside of the house—“ there’s the forerunner ; and it will be a gaye and stiff storm, if that be a true sample. Mary, my doo, ye had better streek yersel down, and try and get a blink of sleep ; but first take a cupful of my cordial, and eat a bit of my cake, ye will feel the benefit of them baith.” So saying, Nanse prepared a beverage resembling tea, which she poured into the little cup we have already noticed ; to this she added sugar and cream, and, taking with her one of the small round cakes, went to the bedside, and whispered, “ Mary Morison, listen to me. D’ye understand these tokens in earth and air ? They are intimations that a son is to be born of the Roldan blood. I ken the thing weel ; and so it has ever happened since their castle stood in Glengarnock, and that’s an auld tale. Drink this draught, and eat this cake ; the dale will tell ye there’s sorcery in the one and witchcraft in the other, but dinna trow them ; it will be nae mair than enough to get ye through the howe of this night.—That’s a good lass ; ye will soon be something else. Now lay down your head, and

compose yersel with your best skill." She retired from the bedside, and sitting down by the fire spread out her palms, and seemed for some time employed in prayer.

"Jeanie Rabson," she whispered, when she had concluded her devotion, "dinna mind me; I am ane of the old church, ye ken, and maybe my ways seem strange in your sight; but the cordial I have given her has been blessed beyond sea, and blessed here; and, moreover, it is sovereign in soothing women in the trial pang. And the prayer I muttered was to the patron saint of the house of Roldan: sae all is done that can be done; but, bless me! Jeanie, these are braw matters for a Morison: here's a laced cap, worth a couple of gowd guineas; a barrie-coat and bodice fit for a prince; and, did ever een see the like! a wrapper made, for aught I ken, of cygnet down. How has shie come by these, think ye? They look like the castle! I'm rad this lass is no sae simple as she seems."

The other listened to these words of suspicion with an untroubled brow. "She is just what she seems, Nanse, and nae mair," Jeanie replied: "she has a proud spirit, and sae the hale land will see yet; but these braws she mauna bear a' the blame of, neither: what could a body do?"

I c'en put to my hand and helped her; she will find few enow to help her soon ;" and the tears stood in the maiden's eyes as she spoke.

"I wish that I were really a witch-wife," said Nanse, "that when I shake all the crops and kill all the cattle of the hard-hearted nabobs of the land, I might spare what belongs to Howeboddom, to show my goodwill to the name of Rabson. What's that? Did ye no hear a voice?"

Jeanie had been arranging, behind a little screen, the gear which we have allowed Nanse Halberson to describe, and was looking on it with a quiet eye when this question was put. "I hear nought," said she, "save the increasing sough of the wind, and the rushingplash of the rain: it's a dismal night!"

"It is just the fit night for a Roldan to be born in. Hear! D'ye no hear how the demon of the tempest is coming plunging from linn to linn; and see, the hand of time is on the stroke of twal'. That's the poor lassie moaning in her sleep; the cordial will enable her to steal a wee bit of a sough and a dover. O! I mind the night weel on which the present Lord Roldan was born: ye would have trowed that the air was on fire, and that demons were trampling down the green groves

of Glengarnock : the very dead, it is said, crap out of their graves, and sat in spectral rows on the throughstanes, thinking it was the day of doom."

"Preserve us!" said Jeanie, edging her chair nearer to Nanse ; "that's awful talk: would it no be wiser, think ye, to pray a scriptural prayer, than to be speaking of demons and the hour of doom? I trust both are distant."

"It's nae time for doctrine now," said the other. "D'ye hear that? All the little streams have united their floods, and poured them down the Elfin-glen: only look out! there's a torrent that would float Roldan castle, if it were a ship, and a thousand mariners on board."

By those acquainted with the strange rapidity with which streams swell into irresistible torrents when a thunder-plump descends on the uplands, no explanation will be required for the inundation which now poured down the Elfin-glen. Each little hollow acting like a filler, and every brae-side contributing its share, supplied the narrow linn with more water than it could well swallow; while trees, and stones, and earth, mingling with the flood, came tumbling down, dashing from rock to rock, from linn to linn, and from cave to cavern, with a noise and a tumult to which little in these isles can be compared.

Just as the first tremendous dash of the torrent reached the leap beside the Elfin-cavern, and came plunging, with all its stones and trees, shaking the cottage as if the demon of the storm had seized it by the roof;—a deep, deep moan, and a faint scream hurried the two watchers to the bedside.

“ I kenned it wad be this way,” said Nanse. “ They have baith come together, and I like it all the better. Mary, my doo ! Mary Morison ! it’s a’ safely owre ;—it’s a braw boy-bairn.”

“ Is it world like ?” murmured a low voice, “ for oh, it has come in sorrow !”

“ Warld like !” exclaimed Nanse, “ wha ever saw ane of the race that was na warld like ? The Roldans are the handsomest forms in all the south countree.”

A slight flush was visible on the mother’s face at these words ; she clasped her hands and holding them above her, looked up and prayed—prayed for the fourth person of this little lonesome community.

“ Ye maun take another mouthful of the blessed cordial,” said Nanse. “ Na, nae naysays: the noble grandmother of this bonnie boy—a bonnie boy he is, I can tell ye—drank the self-same draught out of the samen cup, when she

was made lighter of Lord Roldan. Now, compose yersel; I have had tenderer gear to handle than ye are, weel I wot; ye will do well enough."

The storm which still raged, and the torrent which still came pouring down, were unheeded by Jeanie in the deep interest which she took in this trying scene, and more particularly in the motions of Nanse, whose conversation and doings had not at all removed the kind of suspicious dread which her character was calculated to impress. She put some pure water into a basin: then taking a small phial from her bosom added its contents to the water, drop by drop.

"Nanse," thus Jeanie interrupted her, "ye have done sundry things this night for which there is nae scripture warrant; the blessed cordial was ane, this water is another—it's a piece of papistry I dread. This bonnie wean shall be brought up nae sic gray gate I tell ye, as sure as I am in the body."

"Then wash and dress the bairn yerself," said Nanse, highly offended at the remarks about her creed.

Jeanie, without saying a word, took the babe tenderly between her hands, washed it gently and dexterously in water which she declared was unpolluted with popish devices, dressed it with equal

neatness and skill, and then said, “I think I may venture to restore it to the mother’s bosom, for, oh ! her heart maun be yearning for it.”

Nanse looked on all this with an interest which showed that her sudden anger was as suddenly subsiding.

“ Ye are an odd creature but a kind ane, Jeanie Rabson,” she said, “ and I shall never mair be vexed at what ye say, for ye mean well, ye mean well. Wha would have thought that a mim miou’d maiden could have handled a babe sae saftly and drest it sae deftly ; but ye needna offer it to the mother’s bosom e’en now, for the blessed cordial, be it of papist or protestant descent, is doing a kindly natural office. There, d’ye see how she’s smiling in slumber ? She thinks she has the babe in her balmy bosom. When could ye have made a drink that could have done that ? ”

“ Nanse,” said the other, “ let us ken ane anither better frae this time forward. I never met wi’ ony body that I found to be so bad as they were ca’d. But, oh ! woman, why should ye gar us trow that ye are nae cannie, and why should ane sae sensible traffic and troke wi’ the black delusions of papistry ? ”

Nanse smiled, though a cloud darkened her brow ; and taking the babe from Jeanie she exa-

mined it all over, her face brightening and clouding alternately as she handled every part.

Then inclining her ear bedward, and holding up her finger, said, “ Mary’s asleep still : I will read the doom of the babe : listen, Jeanie.” Attentively did she listen ; for the mysterious air and manner, and a certain knack in hitting marks afar off or dimly visible, had obtained for Nanse a reputation hovering between fortune-teller and witch.

“ How long, and white, and round the fingers are, and how shapely the wrist and palm ! I could show you, Jeanie, but it’s Chaldaic to you and to millions more, how by ilka score and line I can see as plainly as in a book what will be the fortune of the babe.”

“ I’m no sure that such knowledge is lawful,” said the other. “ It is but the knowledge of nature,” replied Nanse : “ D’ye think that the fortune here, and the fate hereafter, of ane and a’ of us, is not distinctly written down already ? There’s mair bright than what is black here : he will be a man ; aye, and a brave and a noble ane ; and win mair fame in far fields than all the Roldans ever won at hame, and they have nae won little. He will be in peril by man’s machinations : and as he was born in a storm, so stormy at first will his fortunes be : he need neither dread fire nor steel,

but let him beware of water. What was that? I heard something which belongs neither to the wind nor the rain without!"

"I hear nothing," said Jeanie. "And d'ye think, now, Nanse, that it is written he will be lord of Roldan? O! if I could but be sure of that, how light my heart would be; and O! what a load it would lift off the heart of Mary! Eh! I did hear something now!"

Nanse had already risen; and walking over the floor as softly as if she walked on eggs, opened the door, and went out. Jeanie imagined she heard whisperings: and gently depositing the babe in the mother's bosom, went into the open air. The rain had ceased; the clouds were passing away; there she found Lord Roldan in conference with Nanse Halberson, and heard the latter say, in answer to the other's question—"A brave boy, and the mother in a healthy slumber."

Jeanie stepped in between them, and pushing away a purse which Nanse was on the point of receiving, said, "Take it back, my lord, and begone: you are insulting one who cannot now protect herself."

"You know not what you are doing, young woman," said Lord Roldan; "you are refusing fortune for the absent."

“I know well what I am doing,” replied Jeanie; “and I carena what I am refusing: I am doing for Mary what I know she would do for me. Do you think that by gowden presents, and playactor speeches, ye can bring back peace to her bosom?”

“All the people are mad,” muttered his lordship, “who speak or act for this young woman.”

“You are a base and despicable person!” exclaimed Jeanie. “The moment that Mary found you vile and perjured, that moment ye were as a shadow to her. O that I had but my honest brother’s strength, I would toss ye headlong into that raging stream, and let the demon that ye serve bring ye to dry land!” So saying, and half dragging her companion with her, Jeanie re-entered the cottage.

“Ye have a spice of the very demon, that watches over the house of Roldan, in ye, Jeanie Rabson,” said Nanse; “and wha would have thought it? How d’ye think that Mary and her boy-babe will shoot owre the mony winters and simmers that maun intervene before he can take a man’s task on him? Yon purse was heavy, Jeanie, lass.”

“All the better, Nanse, all the better: we want nane of his benefactions; we wish never

more to see his face ; we wish never more to hear of him."

" We, indeed ! " retorted the other ; " did we baith err with the young lord—are we art and part in this matter ? My certie ! ye *we* weel."

" Yes, I say *we*," replied Jeanie, her brow flushing as she spake. " I say *we* to the world, because though we were not comrades in folly, we shall be comrades now since she is in adversity. But oh, Nanse, what difficulty there will be in getting her proud nature to stoop to be obliged to ony ane ! It is there I dread her, and ye maun help me, Nanse ; we maun lay our heads together, and even impose upon her that we may help her."

Nanse took Jeanie silently by the hand, and pressed it, while the tears were dropping from her eyes. " Ye are a right-hearted maiden—aye ! I'll help ye, Jeanie."

When the morning dawned, the wreck which the storm had wrought was visible through the little vale : the herbs and flowers, rooted out by the torrent, were heaped on the cliffs which overlooked the pools of the linn, and large trees were swept away, or hung splintered and shattered around. The tenants of the linns had been the sorest sufferers.

“ There they lie,” said Jeanie, “ the ring-straked, the speckled, and the spotted. There’s a sermon in them: owre muckle o’ the element they loved has been their ruin, as owre muckle prosperity is the ruin of man. Yesterday they wantoned in the stream, and lap, and swam, and longed for a shower, to bring them flies from the air and food from the earth: the shower descended—and where are they? They were tossed about like straws by the impetuous torrent, and there they lie by the dozen among Mary’s roses and lilies. Let us carry some of the fairest to her; for, as the sun is now risen, she will be awake.”

They went into the cottage: Mary had admitted the babe into her bosom, and, with blushing cheeks and eyes filled with tears of mingled woe and gladness, was looking at the boy where he lay.

“ God has not been unmindful of ye, Mary,” said Nanse. “ There’s a boy to your bosom! such as a mother would pray for: he will be a blessing to you, and an honour to the land—and sae his fortune’s spaed. But we maun find him a name: let us e’en lay his mother’s and father’s together, and call him MORISON ROLDAN.”

CHAPTER III.

Out spake a dame, of wrinkled eild,
O' gude advisement comes nae ill.

BURNS.

THE story of Mary Morison flew over the land. By some it was averred that she was the wedded wife of the young lord, who hesitated to own his love for one of low degree, and a heretic; others said that he was an infamous loon, and the lass a base limmer; while Nickie Neevison, dissenting from all, declared that the young lord rode down to the Elfin-glen at midnight, to own his marriage and kiss his babe, but was confronted by that witch, and what was waur, papist, Nanse Halberson, who coost her cantraips owre him, and hindered him from doing what was righteous, even though Jeanie Rabson—and blessings on her weel-faured face for it—fleeced, and prayed, and amraigd gade down on her knees to the carlin, to consent to the interview and the owning.

“But waur nor a’”—thus Nickie concluded her version of the story—“when the young lord—there’s something gude in all of the name of Roldan—found that glamour prevailed, he had enough of Christian strength left to drop a purse of gowd—mair nor the carlin could weel lift—at her feet; and then, as grace wad have it, his horse bore him away frae peril. And what d’ye think she did wi’ it? Laid it by for the creature and the guiltless wean? Na, troth atweel no: she flung it right into the raging torrent, and bade the devil dive for it if he wanted it; and that’s as true as I am here.”

These rumours reached at last the castle of Roldan: they entered first into the ears of the cowkeeper, the shepherd, and the gardener, who held the dread secret for the space of an hour; and then, to make their minds easy, shared it with the dairy-maid, the kitchen-girl, and the errand-boy. For the ease of their consciences, those lower functionaries informed the steward and housekeeper of the rumour; who went together and told it to the lady’s own maid; she instantly sought out the priest, and hesitated not to intrude on his devotions, to lay the important secret before him. The priest told her she was a good girl, saluted her, and said,

“This comes of encouraging heretics; I must communicate the same to my honoured lady. To err with one of the true church is, doubtless, an error; but to commit folly with one of the unbelievers, is a sin for which the church demands severe atonement.”

“But,” said my lady’s own woman, emboldened, perhaps, by the familiarity of the priest, “they say that our young lord holds queer notions in church matters, and disna take it all for gospel which the church believes. I myself have heard him say that some of the saints in our calendar were knaves; aye! and that sundry of the lady-saints were nae better than ye tell me Mary Morison is.”

“My child,” said the priest, bestowing a second and more unctuous salute, “let not such things disturb you: it is enough that we keep up observances, and stand in the eyes of the world in the porch of the church; we cannot all be in the sanctuary. I will enlarge on this at a more opportune season; I must seek out the godly lady, and inform her of this mischance.”

Lady Roldan was sitting in her withdrawing-room, clothed in silk so thick that her gown refused to sit down with her, but continued to stand, though not quite so stiffly as her two female attendants,

who, mistaking the stateliness of their mistress for austerity, put on looks worthy of monumental alabaster before life and poetry dawned upon art. Those two household authorities were informing her of the ravages of the unlooked-for tempest of last night ; and though they both spoke at once, and both thought themselves listened to, it was evident that their lady's mind was not with their tale :—it was busy with an event ushered in by the like elemental strife ; namely, the birth of Lord Roldan. This communicated a melancholy thoughtfulness to her looks, which accorded well, too, with the dim but elegant antiquity of the room where she sat. The walls, and floor, and ceiling were of Scottish oak—as black as soot, and as hard as stone : tradition added—and all of one tree, too ; but the massive beams, and the deep and far-projected caryings rendered the legend too romantic for even popular belief.

The seclusion in which the Lady Winifred lived, her stateliness of manners, and intercourse extending but to a few old catholic families, impressed the people of Glengarnock with a respect for her, in which there was a small admixture of the superstitious. As she was eminently charitable and humane, the hospitality of her house and her personal attentions were often called into

action; for when a vessel was wrecked in the bay—and the shifting sand-banks rendered that a frequent occurrence—who was so ready as the household of Lord Roldan to help the mariners in their struggles for life, or whose hand was so ready as that of the Lady Winifred to render that life durable which she had helped to preserve. She was therefore heard of chiefly in times of storm and disaster, which induced that district authority, Nickie Neevison, to aver, that her ladyship had more of the raven than the dove in her nature, since she only made her appearance when ships were sinking, women shrieking, and men drowning. All this was wellnigh lost on the peasantry in the dislike which they entertained for her religion.

“She’s a good woman,” said a Presbyterian; “it’s a pity she’s a papist.”

“She’ll get a scaud, I fear me, for a’ her acts,” said a Cameronian; “for good deeds are as cauld as clarts, and charity is but a filthy rag; she lives among gods of stone and of brass: will they save her? Na, na!”

“She caused three poor lads to be haurled frae the wild waters,” said an Independent; “and gave them food, and wine, and red gold? How did she ken but she was stepping in between them

and God, who was reading them a great moral lesson ; it was an unweighed act, and if they work any mischief in the sight of heaven, she'll find she has mickle to answer for."

Such were the notions held by the peasantry of the land concerning the charity of Lady Winifred on the morning to which we allude ; and, to say the truth, her deeds that way were not at all acceptable to those of her own household. They beheld in every vagrant fed, every wanderer clothed, and every destitute person, whether of sea or land, who partook of her bounty, not a fellow-creature gladdened and sent on their way rejoicing, but a sort of human cormorant, crammed with the good things which should have found the way to their own lips ; covered with the clothes which they reckoned their perquisites ; and enriched with the money which they calculated on as an addition to their own wages due to their worth.

When it was announced to the Lady Winifred that Father Borthwick desired an audience, she rose, and retiring into the audience-chamber, placed herself in a sort of chair of state, in which the Lords of Roldan sat whilst administering justice. Whenever the lady thought it necessary to occupy this hereditary seat, the

tidings spread through the family, and twenty ears and as many eyes were put in situations where they could both hear and see without chance of detection. The chair increased the solemnity of the scene: it was carved richly, and very massive; cherubs' heads terminating below in eagles' claws, presented their plump faces, and shone bright with frequent handling, throwing back at the same time their ample wings, forming arms too high for the ease of the occupier. On the back thistle blossom and leaves were intertwined with the cognizance of the house of Roldan, a scallop-shell and sword; and over the whole, a mermaid was sculptured with her long hair wandering like sea waves, while instead of harp or mirror, she bore in her hands a new-born male babe, countenancing the tradition that the family came from the sea. On either side of this formidable seat stood Lady Winifred's two female attendants; and all eyes were on the door, when it opened slowly, and Father Borthwick stood before her.

“Be seated, and be brief,” said the lady, “for I have that on my spirits which requires private communing with my own mind.” She motioned him to a seat, but Father Borthwick preferred

standing; it gave something of an importance, he imagined, to his words; while a chair was rather a place for familiar conversation, and therefore unsuited for the purposes of rebuke, admonition, or denunciation; three points of Christian doctrine in which he excelled.

“Lady,” said the father, “I come with no tidings of joy, the saints have permitted a shower to fall upon the mountains, which hath swollen the rivulets to rivers, and lambs have been swept away, with much fine linen that lay whitening on the banks.”

Lady Winifred nodded, saying, “Go on, I have heard something of this, we shall find a remedy.”

“The cure must come from Christ, lady, and from the holy Virgin, and from the blessed saints; but there are matters for which there is no cure, even the deep cancer of heresy, for it is of that I must now speak.”

“Say on,” said Lady Winifred, “we are not at this hour to learn that the ancient church is sore bested in this land, and that foes, who never agree among themselves, have united against her, and desire to see the plough passed over the sites of her sacred altars.—Go on.”

Father Borthwick darted an indignant glance,

—not at the lady, but at one of her two attendants, who chanced to be a presbyterian—took a hasty stride or two about the chamber, and thus continued: “ And why is the true and ancient church begirt with foes? How has it happened that the heretical foot has been placed upon the believing neck? It is the will of the saints, lady, as a punishment for manifold sins; a punishment for slackness with hand and sword. The nobles of Scotland preferred their own quarrels to those of the faithful church; the nobles of England, preferred their fair domains to the kingdom of the saints; yea, even the good and gallant house of Roldan served not the saints surely, but followed their headstrong natures, their own worldly devices; revelled in chambering and gallanting, even with heretics, and now behold the result! evil has come upon you.

“ What in the name of all that’s holy,” interrupted Lady Winifred, “ has happened?”

“ Please you, my lady,” said her presbyterian attendant, in return for the insulting glance we have alluded to, “ your own bower and tire woman, May Corsock, whom the pious father recommended, is less rosie than she used to be, and as she has just been with him for some

space of time, she may have, by her confession, alarmed him for the purity of the household, and now, like the gray-bearded knight in the ballad of Tamlane, he comes to you crying,

“ And ever alas, for thee, Janet
For we'll be blamed a'.”

The lady smiled at this audacious speech; she rebuked her attendant however, yet almost with an encouraging mildness for she had formed her own opinion of Father Borthwick, and scarcely gave him the credit he demanded, for self-denial and abstinence.

His first impulse was to unloose the thunder with which the church had armed him, on the head of the waiting-woman; his second, was to regard it rather as a bit of forwardness, and for this he had his own reasons. “Lady,” he said, “there is a time for all things; but surely, after the events of the by-gone night, this is not the moment for light looks and levity of speech; but let it pass—she who has offended belongs to a lax church, and may claim license of speech as well as of conduct in all things.”

“ You talk of our license,” said the offended waiting-woman, of the creed of Calvin; “d'ye think I did nae see May Corsock coming out

of your sitting-room this morning, wiping her lips—license, indeed !”

“ It is the way of the world,” said the father ; ‘ you distinguish not ; there are two kinds of kisses—one after the flesh, one after the spirit ; I saluted the young woman in the latter sense, according to the rules of my order.”

“ Let me hear no more of this,” interrupted Lady Winifred ; “ the license of your order seems likely to lead to error ; and you, you foolish person, you are not so young but you might have distinguished between a kiss which is after the fashion of this valley, and a holy salutation according to the church.”

“ Lord, my lady !” exclaimed the incensed waiting-woman, “ do you think I don’t know the difference between a blink of the sun, and a glimpse of the moon ? Moreover the salute of which I spake, was a sincere ane : it was, as ane of your ladyship’s fool play-books says—a clamorous smack.”

“ I shall say out my say,” said the father very gravely, “ when Lady Winifred can control her menials, and prevent them from aspersing holy men and pious women ;” and saying so, he flung out of the room.

The presbyterian attendant burst out into a

fit of laughter, “I think,” cried she, “I stopped the meddling priest; choked the snake in his own poison. Would you believe it my lady, Father Borthwick came full of pious wrath to acquaint you with a wee fault which Lord Roldan, I am tauld, has committed; a fault of youth; yet at the same time was walking in the same way himself, only, to be sure, my young lord didna gang to work in the spirit of the church, while there’s nae doubt that the father saluted May Corsock according to the rule and obligation of his order.”

Lady Winifred drew herself up with some dignity, and said, “Trifle not with me! What has my son done? What dread crime has Lord Roldan committed, that neither meddling priest nor impertinent menial dare mention it?”

“At the twelfth hour of the night,” said the attendant, “there was a boy-bairn born in the Elfin-glen, and whether right or wrong, they lay the blame on our young lord.”

“I know it all, my maidens,” said lady Winifred, but my information came by a suspicious messenger; therefore go to the Elfin-glen and there learn the truth. Do your errand discreetly and mildly, for I always thought well of this minion,

Mary Morison, and of the race she is come from.—Go, both of you."

Never did a couple of hawks seek the haunts of the dove, nor a couple of hounds seek the home of the hare with more alacrity and extreme willingness of heart, than those two starched and scandal-searching spinsters turned their faces towards the abode of poor Mary Morison. They were of different countries, different creeds, different tempers, and different looks. She of the south, was squat and plump, with small searching eyes, and a face like a firebrand: she of the north was tall and lean, and somewhat bent, and so puckered were her cheeks, and so brown her skin, that it seemed to have been stripped from a mummy and half stuffed for present use with Christian flesh and blood. The former was a Catholic, with all the ascetic rules by heart, though she observed none of them; those who wished to be well with her, called her by her name at full length, Mrs. Clementina Smallbones, while her unfriends, of whom she had, like all favourites, a few, knew her by the name of the Durham Dumpling, in honour of her native neighbourhood; the latter was a Presbyterian in religion, and a Jacobite

by education; she was from Gallawater, and named in the register-book Beckie Turnbull, but was much more widely known by the name of Sour Plooms of Gallashiels, in which was expressed at once the souness of her looks and the place which gave her birth. Both were united to the house of Roldan by the services of their forefathers in the field, and of their own in the chamber, and were in all respects as complete fixtures in the household as the chair of state, on which we have bestowed so much description.

For a few hundred yards of the way the amiable Clementina and the gentle Beckie exchanged looks only of mutual surprise at the errand on which they were sent, and a few words on the growing depravity of human nature; they soon, however, were enough disengaged from matters of moral concernment, to attend to—what was in their hands a source of perpetual bitterness—namely, the great question between the Protestant church and that of Rome. It is true, that they disputed about the dress, and quarrelled about the manners, and were acrimonious concerning the trappings and tassellings and outward show of things; but then, this by no means diminished the bitterness of

their bickerings, for ladies are querulous in matters of millinery: the strife between them, too, was augmented by the recollection of the scene in which Sour Plooms had triumphed over Father Borthwick, and the Dumpling resented this because it humbled the Catholic church, in the person of one of its ministers, and worse still, was acceptable to Lady Roldan, and consequently, as she said to herself, put Sour Plooms upon pattens, and set herself upon the bare stocking soles.

They had concluded a long and sharp bickering when the Elfin-glen with its cottage and woods appeared in view—the sum total was expressed in the ludicrous images with which they finished the strife. “The heretical church,” said Clementina, “is a discarded leman of the aristocracy, whom they have stripped of all her ornaments, and left her corrupt body in a ditch, with scarce a rag on to cover her nakedness. “And the Romish superstition,” retorted Beckie, “is a patched and painted madam; lame, with made teeth and bought breasts; all scarlet and splendour without, all rottenness and filth within—she pollutes whom she loves, and she poisons whom she hates.”

“Well said, Sour Plooms,” exclaimed Lord

Roldan, bursting upon them from a thick roan or bank of hazels, which reached from the hills to the footpath. "Well said, by my faith; but the idea is in verse—

'Pained by her love, or poisoned by her hate.'

Who is the amiable lady that sat for the picture?"

"Even an old acquaintance of your own, my lord," answered Sour Plooms: "her that sitteth on the seven hills of Rome. Weel, I wot, she has not touched a Scottish hill with her hinder end—clothed in scarlet though it be—these two hundred years."

"My lord," thus interposed Dumpling, doubly incensed at the words of her companion and the levity of the young lord, "it would be more like your birth, aye, and more like the religion in which you were bred, if, instead of wandering like one of Robin Hood's men in wild cloughs and savage places, that you went home to speak comfort to your lady mother, who is ill at ease. Last night was an awful night, and this has been an awful day."

"Deed," said Sour Plooms, "Clementina has right good cause to say what she has said. Word came, I wot nae well how, to Father

Borthwick, that your lordship had been doing mair than you ought to have done wi' some one no far from the Elfin-glen ; so what does he do but seeks May Corsock, and explains to the simple lassie—all in a pious way, and according, he said, to the rule of his order—the evil which your wilful worship has been playing, merely by way of nurture and admonition. I, being a heretic, mistook what was clerical, for something else. Lady Winifred though of the true church, fell into my heresy ; so you see, there has been nought but mistakes on all hands ; and that being the case, let me advise your lordship to find your way home ; your explanation and repentance, will be swallowed now ; and they may be spurned at to-morrow.” They went on their way, and Lord Roldan, thinking Sour Plooms spoke sensibly, turned his steps toward the castle.

The coming of this ill-omened pair was to poor Mary Morison and her new-born babe, what the presence of a couple of kites is to a mother thrush, sheltering under her outstretched wings her little household of half-fledged gorlings. She had just awakened from a refreshing sleep, and was blushing to look at the little nestler in her bosom, when Nanse Halberson whispered

to Jeanie Rabson, “Here comes Sour Plooms, and here comes Dumpling from the castle to harrow up the heart of our poor Mary with their questions and condolences. Haud your tongue like grim death, and leave me to deal wi’ them —they’ll no cross this threshold, and yet a crabbit word shanna cross my lips.”

Nanse twitched her gown here, and pulled her gown there, set her broad bonnet awry on her head, stuck a roke with flax into her girdle, took a spindle in her hand, and sitting down in an old chair, right in the centre of the door, began to hum and spin. The sound no sooner reached the ear of an old overgrown cat, which sat drowsy by the fire, than away went grimalkin, reminded perhaps of other days, and springing into her lap, completed externals entirely to her satisfaction. “Thou art the wisest of cats,” said she, stroking down its glossy back, “thou hast thought beyond thy kind; I doubt thou art a witch in earnest.”

The two messengers suddenly doubled a little hedge of green holly, and came full upon Nanse; Sour Plooms was foremost. Now had this happened in London or Edinburgh, cities into which superstitious fears never penetrated, no doubt Nanse and her roke and her witch-like attire,

would have alarmed no one, and amused many; but in the Elfin-glen of Glengarnock, where some are in as great fear of being witched as the citizens of London of having their pockets picked, it was quite a different thing; not that such powers, though partly imputed, were altogether believed in; but it was thought advisable at least to avoid intercourse with certain unsonsie dames, of whom honest Nanse was one, as it was reckoned discreet to keep a sharp look out in haunted places, by all who had imaginations and travelled late. Our readers must not marvel, therefore, when we tell them that on beholding this unsonsie vision, Sour Plooms not only pulled up at once, but as Dumpling averred, actually fell back upon the rear division, upsetting her in a moment, and tumbling her down the brae, as Sour Plooms added like a Dutch cheese, or a hot haggis into which some mischief-loving hand had put quicksilver. In truth, both were alike alarmed, at first; though in relating the interview afterwards, it was all courage in the one, and cowardice in the other. Dumpling always concluded by observing, that "Sour Plooms forgot that the whole was fore-ordained;" while Sour Plooms remarked, that "no such tremor could have come over them,

had her companion brought but a drop or two of holy water, blessed, in the spirit of his order, by the pious lips of Father Borthwick.

They now rallied and advanced together, and then came to anchor close to where the adversary sat. Nanse fixed her eyes upon them and said, "It's fulfilled now; here are three of us; and weel I trow, we might pass for the weird sisters; I have waited three stricken hours for your coming." So saying, she continued drawing out the thread, and winding it as she twisted it on the roke.

"Speak her fair Beckie, speak her fair," whispered Clementina, "for she is a fearful woman, and can disturb our sleep and spoil our appetite, and turn our pillows into hedgehogs, and our snowy sheets into blistering plasters—O speak her fair!"

"Hout, tout, woman," muttered Sour Plooms, "she has nae sic skill; all her art can only make a cow keep up her milk, cream retain the butter, and turn a godly salute, bestowed in the spirit of the holy church, into a worldly kiss, which may cost a skirling."

"Now it is done," said Nanse, suddenly rising and casting her arms about, "it is done and ye shall have the advantage of it. There!

the tane haud the roke, I'll pou the thread, and every turn I gie round thy thumb thus, the tither maun keep count; and if ye tyne haud, or lose count, ye will not only never learn what is to be the fortune of the house of Roldan, but ye will be liable to be turned into fillies when ye gae sleep, and galloped till daylight owre the heights of Shehallion, and the cloudy tops of Penman-maur. Mind what I say kimmers."

Both expressed their readiness to do any thing that Nanse, whom they called douce and honest, desired, saving and except the touching of enchanted thread—the thread of fate—and counting the quaility.

"It's no that I have any dreador of doing it," said Sour Plooms, "for thread's thread, and words are words; and I have aye keepit gaye and perpendicular in the sight of man; but there's nae scripture warrant for it: here's Beckie, she's blind with the delusions of papistry; she may do all ye bid her; and by doing it in ignorance, be saved: while I, alas! would err against the clearest light."

"Fools baith!" exclaimed Nanse. "Will the roke harm ye, though it grew owre a put down man's grave? Will the thread hurt ye, though I span it to a tune whilk Clootie himself whistled

at Tib of Gilgourack's wedding?" In vain she offered the roke: both stood their ground, but drew back their hands, dreading to touch, yet desirous of being admitted to her mystery on less suspicious terms. "Gae hame to your ladye mistress, ye gowks," said Nanse; "and tell her to do her own errands herself. Come here again,

"And dread a kittle cast."

She finished by shutting the door, while Sour Plooms and her companion returned to the castle, glad to conclude a dangerous enterprise so safely, and diffusing the many-coloured hues of their alarmed fancies over the sayings and doings of uncannie Nanse.

This happened about the commencement of summer, and harvest was advanced before Lady Winifred was able to fulfil her purpose of visiting the Elfin-cottage and its hapless inhabitants: she had been ill, and her physicians prescribed repose, bodily and mental. She recovered the sooner that Father Borthwick did not venture to hurt her body by alarming her soul; and—we speak it with doubt and apprehension—from two visits which at Lady Winifred's express request Nanse Halberson paid her in her own chamber, without witnesses—she obtained great relief. We must, however, say, that half the household, with Sour

Plooms at their head, prayed—they called it remonstrated—that her ladyship would eschew all comings and gangings, conversations and communings with women possessed with familiar spirits, and that she would allow them to sign the sign of the cross with a sharp knife on the brow of Nanse Halberson when she next crossed the castle-gate. As this kind proposition was not conceded, the lady herself was accused among her menials of witchcraft, and a taste for such little-cattle, as Sour Plooms called them. But when Lady Winifred commanded her two attendants to accompany her to the Elfin-glen, they both broke out with, “Weel, what maun be, maun be: here will be a bonnie gae to !

“They gallop fast whom deils and lasses drive.”

Mary Morison, not at all dreaming of such a visit, was in her garden spinning fine flax, in which she excelled; her dress was neat, and her hair, deprived of the symbolical fillet or snood, hung in one glittering fleece over her shoulders, and kept waving and curling with the breeze, audible and no more among the bushes of the glen. It was midday, and the sun was warm: the bees were busy, the flowers of the season were in bloom, and her son, Morison Roldan—we give his full name again—was on the bank at her feet. As he

rolled to one side his little fingers would clutch at a flower; or, as he rolled back to the other, his eyes would brighten at the sight of a butterfly or a bee; nor did the latter show any wish to raise an angry hum as he shook the blooms from which they were extracting sweets. He seemed conscious of the beauty of the flowers and of the labours of the bees, for he smiled as the latter alighted on a blossom, which he strove with his short arms to reach. His joy brought now and then a faint smile to his mother's cheek; and so much was her mind occupied by tender and melancholy thoughts, that she was not aware of the approach or presence of a stranger till Lady Winifred in all her glory stood before her.

This was put down by that lady's two attendants to what the one called "the vile," and the other "the stinking pride," which they averred was the only birthright of the house of Morison.

"For, Clementina," said Sour Plooms, "the very mavis that was singing sae sweet aboon head, as soon as it saw us and my lady, dropped its song—reason good; for even we mauna speak in her presence unbidden, and as it flew away it maist brushed with its wings the good-for-nae-thing's brow, as much as to say, look about ye, for yere betters are coming."

“Aye, and Beckie,” whispered Dumpling, “Mary could not but know that we were near, for had we not to put forth our hands, and not only hold my lady’s brocaded gown aboon the thistles that choke the land, but to guide it safely through the barn slit of a garden-gate? and yet she neither kenned nor cared: had she been educated, her ear could not have resisted the music of such rustling silk—she merits her fate.”

Indulging in these pleasing and charitable reflections, they took their places on each hand of Lady Winifred, and composed no weak caricature on the splendid picture of Tragedy and Comedy attending the Tragic Muse.

As soon as Mary Morison was aware of this dread visitation, she arose, laying aside her work, and slightly courtesying, stood before Lady Winifred with a look at once troubled and firm, while the contest of feelings in her face, giving her cheeks one moment to the rose, and the other to the lily, added to the brightness of expression, for which, it is still remembered, her face was remarkable.

The lady spoke first, and it was in no conciliatory tone. “So, minion—for like the heretic minister of these parts I will not name you, but from a different reason than his—so, minion, you

have added to the numbers of your establishment since we last met," she glanced at Morison as she spoke, "and that, too, without the sanction of a church either holy or heretic." Sour Plooms and Dumpling glanced at each other, as if ready to renew their seven years' war on creeds, and tossed their noses, breathing hostility and disdain. "So, minion, I say," continued the lady, "you have forgot the lessons of the church; you have forgot what was due to my station and family, and laid your snares for those whose pure and ancient blood should never mingle with aught so mean and servile."

"Madam," said Mary, "I have indeed neglected the lessons which were taught me, and neglected the example which was set me. Oh! it was but last night, as I knelt over my father and mother's grave, I thought the very dust beneath my knees stirred, as if conscious of the guilty burthen. Madam, I have sinned; but I laid no snares. Alas! if I did, I caught the gorehawk instead of the dove."

Lady Winifred reddened cheek and brow. "Gorehawk! bold minion, you gorehawk it well! —but be it so—no noble bird of my house will stoop again on so mean a quarry.—Have you any thing more to say?"

“I understand your simile, madam,” said Mary; “but you need neither clip the wings, nor otherwise restrain, for me, the noble birds you wot of. I trusted—I believed written vows and plighted oaths, and sinned. What has that folly brought me to? A cup of cold water, and a home deserted by all but its miserable owner, and a faithful friend or two. But I speak not to complain; yet hear me, and believe me or not: the wind which stirs these flowers shall burn them—the honey which these bees suck shall poison instead of sustain them—the stream which flows over these rocks shall melt them—and the draught which this desolate babe now solicits from my breast—hush! Morison—shall turn to nitric acid and destroy him, when I listen again to Lord Roldan.”

She sat down, clasped her boy to her breast, put her hand and foot to her little wheel, and, though her long white fingers trembled, she drew a thread round and evenly.

“You should not sit down in our lady’s presence without permission,” said Clementina. “But when had one of your church any touch of courtesy?—they keep on their hats before God.”

“Had she been nurtured,” said Sour Plooms, “under the pious Father Borthwick, she would

have learned courtesy in the spiritual meaning of his order."

"Silence, both," said Lady Winifred, with a frown. "And, minion—Mary, I mean—listen to me. Abide by your resolution and your babe, and you shall know no want; forget it, and I shall make this glen tenantless and houseless, and turn thee to the world to feel its scorn, and, worse still, its pity."

"Lady Winifred Roldan," said Mary, rising up; "from your proud house neither me nor mine shall accept food or raiment. I have long since made up my mind what to do; for it was not yesterday that I learned vows were to be broken like dicer's oaths. But the words spoken about this little glen and humble shealing might have been spared. They belong not less to the Morisons than your castle belongs to the Roldans. My ancestors paid down drops of their heart's blood for all, and more than they got.—Good day."

She hastened out of the garden as she spoke, bolted the door of her cottage, and knelt in prayer, desiring strength and support.

"It's a pity but she had been born aboon the salt," said Sour Plooms. "She's as proud as the best lady of the land: she has either a drop of the

deil's or the Roldan's blood in her ; but the latter
canna weel be, for the women of her house all
feared God and eschewed evil, from the days of
John Knox till now."

CHAPTER IV.

Below, my babe lie still and sleipe,
 It grieves me sair to see thee weipe ;
 If thou'st be silent, I'se be glad,
 Thy maining makes my heart full sad.
 Below, my boy, thy mother's joy,
 Thy father breides me great annoy.

LADY ANNE BOTHWELL'S LAMENT.

To all the people in Glengarnock the mother and babe of the Elfin-glen seemed destitute. How they would shoot over the coming winter, when snows were on the ground, and the nipping spring, when frost-rime whitened every rock and tree, furnished matter for conversation to all; nay, even the laird of Howebottom and his sister Jeanie were among the marmurers; though some averred that they could not comprehend what a douce quean like the laird's sister could mean by paying so many visits to the Elfin-cottage, and, more than that, how she could thole to see Mary Morison and her babe perish, as perish they must unless fed miraculously. But though the winter was severe,

and the spring far from sunny, Mary and her son looked little like perishing; they were not only well clad, and healthy, and ruddy, but never wanted something for the table when a stranger called, nor a handful of meal or a half-penny for the poor wanderers who lived by begging their bread through the land which their bible taught them to believe God had given them for an inheritance. How this came to pass we shall explain, for we hate mystery.

Mary Morison had a great mind, a ready hand, and a resolved spirit. She said truly when she told Lady Winifred that she had fully made up her mind what to do; and in this what to do was, as our readers will imagine, included sustenance for herself and her child. She was young, she was active, she was willing; she could sew, she could spin, and could, as Nickie Neevison averred, work mair marvels wi' her needle than a ballad-maker could relate in rhyme. On these accomplishments, humble as they were, she not only depended for support, but expected to raise from them sufficient money for the education of Morison—perhaps as much as would put him to college. In these hopes and resolutions she was strengthened and confirmed by Jeanie Rabson, the o'er word of whose song was, ' Mary,

never despair ; do your best, and if ye canna do all, God, or some other gude friend will make out the rest—never despair."

Mary was none of the despairing kind ; though she lived in a lonesome glen she never expected to be fed by the ravens. She wrought early and she wrought late ; she span till the blood of her white fingers dyed the thread ; she sewed till her eyes grew dazzled with lamplight and snowy seams ; and she wrought all manner of flowers upon muslin and lawn, with a neatness and an elegance which brought customers, even those who were partial to a good pennyworth. In winter she wrought at home ; but when the summer season arrived she left her cot, and taking with her Morison and much of her flowered work, she travelled into what are called the wool-lands, where she bartered her work for the finest wool with the shepherds' wives and daughters ; and usually returned with enough to employ her head and hands for a couple of months in the manufacture of stuff, composed of fine flax and fine wool : a durable cloth nearly as rich and glossy as silk.

It is true, that at first the sale for such productions was far from extensive, and Mary had a hard struggle to get ends to meet. She was the better able to do this from a taste which suddenly

grew in Jeanie Rabson for flowered mantles, wrought collars, and even gowns, ornamented with leaf and flower, all done by no other hands than her friend Mary. Then Jeanie always allowed the other to fix her price; because, she said, "Mary really charges moderate for kerchiefs and mantles that might grace a queen; and though I mayna want sic gear just now, it's as weel to get a bargain while pennyworths are to be had; besides, it's no as if I had to pay hard siller for them, a teat of butter, or a stane of meal, or maybe a cheese or a ham mair than we can use at Howeboddom satisfies Mary, so that I may say I get the things for half-nought." In this modest and generous way did one rustic maiden help another in what she called her "wae days;" for be it observed that courtesy and high-souledness are of heaven, and not confined, as some authors ridiculously allege, to those who sit above the salt.

All this was not unobserved by the people of the vale, and their comments upon it were according to their various natures. Nickie Neevison, foremost of all, said, "Jeanie Rabson of Howeboddom will ere lang surprise the world as mickle as Mary Morison has done. She gets ae fantastic piece of finery after another, and

will, if she does nae call a halt, have the half of Howeboddom on her back ; I never liked these solid sicker-foots, they make tremendous whamles whiles."

" Troth atweel, and that's true, Nickie," said Peg Sillock of Sorbie. " It's no the rattling cart that coups soonest ; but I am told that Jeanie disna do all this out of her ain head ; her brother the laird is at the bottom of it a' : and if he does it, as I doubt nae he does, for the love of Mary Morison, then he's safter than some fowk ca' him ; and that's saft enough."

" Ye're a' mistaen of Jean," said a third authority, and that was Sour Plooms herself. " She's a cunning, cannie, bargain-making cuttie, and they say she's making twice her ain siller out of the handy work of the other. As for her of the glen—we dinna name her name in the castle, nor will I name her name here—but she's baith good and bonnie ; and I ken ane that may seek lang before he gets a bride, wi' a fairer face, or a kinder heart. I have named nae names any how, sae nane can carry my clash to the castle."

Others than the laird of Howeboddom and his sister showed respect for Mary. Though her garden was filled in the season with flowers and fruit, the hands which plundered the castle or-

chard touched neither her apples, her pears, nor her plums. Though the Elfin-glen was full of cherries, raspberries, and nuts, not even the wildest schoolboy thought of entering and plucking; nay, though the stream that flowed round her door swarmed with fish, which Mary had not the skill to catch, no one threw a line or neeved a trout, save now and then when some rustic Samaritan, more active in virtue than the rest would, as a matter of amusement, catch a dozen or two and leave them at her door, saying, “These are for little Morison, who will soon be able, poor fellow! to fish himself, and then he can return the compliment: and I’ll warrant he will do it, and mair, for really he’s growing a fine boy, and will be a credit to us a’.” The mother looked on Morison and smiled, and could not help feeling in her own heart that neither his looks nor his merits were overrated.

What the boy would become occasionally employed the attention of some of the district sages, who desired to be reckoned prophets. “I cannot make out the bairn at a’,” said one; “I saw him running like an unbroken colt about the glen, making the cliffs ring with his din; he seemed to have nae aim in his sport. I doubt he’s half a haveral.”—“Ye have seen him, then,

as I never saw him," said the second worthy. " I have seen him thrice, and ilka time he was sitting like a sautpowk, reading volumes of fool sangs and ballads. It needs nae prophet, nor prophet's son, to foretel the upshot of that: if the malady of the muse comes on him, he had better be lying at the back of the Robin-Rigg, with five fathom of sea-water flashing owre him."— "There's just ae thing," said the third and last authority we shall quote, "that can save him frae baith the evils ye allude to, and that is to send him to the school of that wise and fructifying teacher, John Milligan: if there's aught in him, he'll bring it out; if there's nought in him, he will put it in, and sae he's sure to be benefited. But there's ae drawback—wha will pay the penny wage? Half-a-crown a quarter, nae less, for reading; a shilling mair for writing, and another shilling for arithmetic. It's weel that learning's useful, for oh! it's dear."

The conclusions of these authorities had something of inspiration; for, on the selfsame day and hour, Mary had reasoned herself into the resolution of sending Morison to the barony school, kept by the aforesaid John, or, as he was commonly called, Dominie Milligan. She had

When home is gone and money spent

taught the boy to read his bible, and he did it with a graceful ease ; she taught him to write, and he acquired it with singular readiness ; but she wished him to have the advantage which rivalry in a school confers on all. But while she resolved on this, a dread of her own lonesomeness came over her ; she thought of the hours which his presence made light, and of the dark reflections which his innocent smiles had brightened. “ It was but yesterday,” she thought, “ that when I sung that most melancholy sang—which, alas ! I sing owre often, ‘ Lady Bothwell’s Lament’—he came to me when the tears were happing down my cheeks, and said, if he knew but who wrote a sang that made his mother unhappy, he would go and kill them. Poor bairn ! I shall miss him much : and yet his mind must be adorned with knowledge, that he may shed honour on one that, alas ! can shed none on him.”

“ Mother,” said Morison, hanging round her neck, “ I’ll never leave you.”

“ O yes, my boy, ye maun leave me ; it will be for your ain good. Ye maun learn the wisdom which is contained in books ; ye maun become learned in the language in which God conversed with his chosen people, and in which

Christ announced the salvation of believers; otherwise ye will not be able to preach the word wisely."

" But mother," he said, " I dinna want to be a minister; I wad rather gang and push my fortune, as men did lang syne, that I may win gold and jewels wi' a sword in my hand, and gie them to you when I hae done."

" Bless the boy! where did ye learn all these wild thoughts?" inquired Mary, looking strangely on him.

" O, Nanse Halberson told me of knights belted and thrice belted; and I read of others who fought for ladies in distress, and won great battles; and songs were made and sung to the harp in their praise: and kings honoured them, and princesses placed them on their right hand."

" The bairn's demented," said Mary, with a sigh at his visions; " and the sooner I send you to douce John Milligan the better."

Now, Dominie Milligan was a primitive sort of person: he was one of those singular, and, as they called themselves, persecuted sect, Cameronians, and had been educated for the ministry. But sundry obstacles stood in the way of his preferment,—his elevation was deferred till he could be cured of what the flock called John Milligan's

Four Vanities. These vanities were as follow. First, he advocated the propriety of the Broken Remnant, as they called themselves, descending from worshipping God on the hill-tops, and erecting a tabernacle on the plain—which was called a manifest mistrusting of Jehovah, who, though he sometimes greeted them with a thunder-shower which forced its way through the scone bonnets and hoddern gray of the most obstinate believers, was nevertheless understood to mean it simply as a chastening, perhaps a benediction. Secondly, he showed a manifest want of reliance in the Jehovah of the Covenant by openly carrying to Quarrelwood Sacrament a profane utensil called an umbrella, and displaying it there like a banner even over the bald head of that good man, John Curtis—when mercy was falling like manna in the guise of rain—to the shame and scandal of all sound Christians. Thirdly, he openly, and in the presence of John Curtis, Archibald Rowat, and Ebenezer Farley, preachers of the word, avowed his admiration of the ornamented, and, as he called them, eloquent compositions of that episcopal backslider, Jeremy Taylor; preferring them to the prophecies of Alexander Peden, and saying that he liked the sound of thunder better than he did the braying of an

ass. Fourthly and lastly, he scrupled not to observe with devout strictness, that ordinance of man's making and of human wit, the Government Fast, which was a plain owning of the man George Guelph—a king not called through the blessed covenant, but by a profane and episcopalian assembly denominated “the Parliament.”

As a sort of set-off against “the Four Vanities,” it was urged—but this was only by a few—that the Dominie's life was strict and exemplary; his learning, even in the eyes of a laxer kirk, considerable, and though he fairly failed in preaching the word on one or two occasions, that now and then, with a text to his mind, he displayed a touching and simple eloquence, which moved even the sternest, and induced James Macgee, and Mark Macrabin, and Andrew Kennedy—all wise members of the congregation—to declare that John Milligan would, but for the four damning vanities, be a burning and a shining light. One of the texts given as a trial of his genius, from which he failed to draw forth a spiritual balm for his people—was simply the word “pomegranate.”

“O, he had na the savour of true doctrine,” said the aforesaid Macrabin; “he handled the pomegranate as if it had been a frosted

potato." There was nothing for him therefore but to turn himself to less lofty labours; and as the barony school was vacant, he was inducted, with all the advantages thereunto belonging, on the very day on which Morison Roldan became one of his scholars.

When Mary Morison heard that Dominie Milligan was master of Glengarnock school, she instantly resolved to lay down book and birch, and commit her son to his care. The parish school was two miles distant; besides it was kept by Dominie Macnaught, whom the peasants called Sleepy Samuel; because, when called at times to preach the word in the absence of the established pastor, he preached in such a sort as sunk them all into slumber. She was aided in her resolution by the arrival of Jeanie Rabson, to whose judgment she submitted the question of schooling. "Jeanie," she said, "I have proud thoughts—owre proud, maybe. Here I have six webs of the finest linen, weel worth sixty white shillings each; four webs of linsey-woolsey, as bright as silk, for which I have refused fifty shillings a piece; moreover here's flannel and harn claith, more than we'll baith want for years, and more making ready, sae I have at least ten pounds' worth to spare." On

these domestic treasures Jeanie glanced with a satisfied eye as they were displayed before her. “Then,” continued Mary, “we have meal in the kist, barley in the powk, maut in the barrel, flax growing green and long on Bankfoot-holm, potatoes flourishing in the mains of Foregirth, wool and lint for the spinning: and see lass! there’s a pose! fifteen gowd guineas, no less, forbye crown-pieces, all of my own making, with the blessing of God, and the help of thee, Jeanie Rabson.”

“My help,” said Jeanie, “bless the woman! I have helped mair to pou ye down than to haud ye up. I wish ye but heard the laird telling me that I ought to take baith meat and drink wi’ me to Elfin-cot, for he’s sure that my visits are frequent enough to eat ye out o’ house and hald.”

Mary shook her head, and the tears came to her eyes. “Jeanie,” she said, “God has ta’en mair pains in making ye than ye take in showing his wondrous gifts. But that’s no what I wanted to say: I think, since we stand sae weel wi’ the world, that we are justified in giving poor Morrison a lift into the Latin; for O! I’m set on having him made a minister, an honour which my brother Simon was laid out for, but God interposed.”

“ I have just come here to speak about that same,” said Jeanie. “ I canna tell how it is, Mary, but this Morison of thine clings to a’ our hearts. But I agree wi’ you—aye look up. Besides, it’s a grand thing to be learned ; even the semblance o’t has its effect : d’ye mind how Nehemiah Mac—I canna mind the remainder of his name—made sic an impression on a whole hill-side o’ hearers, by repeating, whenever his ain gumption fell short, three lang words of Chaldaic or Sclavonic, I forget whilk ; but, O the sough and sound of them was grand, though I have heard this very Dominie Milligan aver that they werena words, but mere melodious inventions. But a’ this time, where’s my boy, where’s Morison ?”

At the well-known voice of Jeanie, out came Morison from a little closet, where he had a nest rather than a bed, with a few books supplied by the care of his mother and the something touched taste of Nanse Halberson.

Jeanie stroked down his bright locks, which showed more than a desire to curl, looked on his clear broad brow and in his finely-formed face, and saying inwardly, “ Aye, baith father and mither are here ;” turned him suddenly round, then pushing him from her at full arm’s length,

cried, “ Mary, woman, what’s the meaning of all this? Where’s my boy’s green jacket, that we made wi’ sae mickle care? Where’s his scarlet waistcoat that I sewed for him in Howeboddom house when a’ fowk, save our Jamie and mysel were asleep? And where’s his sarks, wi’ the fauld-ing collars, ruffled wi’ cambric that might mense a lord? Ye have made a fright of him ; ye have made him as bare of a’ that’s handsome, as a rose-bush is at Yule—the very dogs will bark at the bairn. Morison, yere mither has turned ye frae as bonnie a boy as the sun ever shone on, into a potato bogle—’deed have ye, Mary!”

The boy laughed, but the moment he looked on his mother he saw that she was moved. He therefore slipped into his little closet and began to arrange his clothes and books, while the following conversation took place between the friends :

“ Jeanie,” said Mary, “ I was till yesterday of your mind : I was, I own it, vain of my son and of his good looks and merits, and thought how well dressed he would be at school, and that baith outwardly and inwardly he might haud up his head wi’ the best of them. But, O ! woman, I got a sad awakening from my dream : Morison—he has ta’en muckle to books of late—had, it seems, been looking among the humble heir-looms of our

house and laid his hand on the bible that my great grandsire, Gideon Morison, bore about his person whether in peace or in war, and which was stained with his own heart's blood at Marston-Moor, in repulsing the charge of Prince Rupert. The bairn was looking for the blood of his ancestor, and, O ! Jeanie, he found that, and he found mair—the record of his mother's shame."

" His presence be about us !" said Jeanie. " What enemy could have written it there ?"

" I am that enemy," replied Mary. " In that book are recorded the marriages and births and burials of my father's house. Morison's birth is there ; but, alas ! no marriage of his unhappy mother—would that her burial was written in it, for this shame is not to be borne."

" Compose yourself, Mary," said the other. " I thought all this bitterness had flown off seven lang years syne. But what did Morison do when he read it?—he couldna understand it—he's owre much of a bairn for that."

" O Jeanie, lass, we only deceive ourselves when we lippen to the ignorance of children ; they have a wonderful quickness—some of them at least. There's Morison, his nether lip aye tauld me when I was treating him owre mickle like a child—but I forget myself. Ye asked me what he

did—he did naught but look in my face and say, ‘Mother, had I a father?’ I could do nothing, Jeanie, but catch him to my bosom and half suffocate him with sobs and half drown him in tears.”

Jeanie Rabson wiped her eyes and said, “Weel now, something of this kind was to have been looked for;”—and there she paused.

“Aye, Jean, ye see what sin and folly bring upon us—us! God forgive me, Jeanie, for the word; I mean to share my guilt wi’ naebody—I have borne it singly, and can bear it still; but, O! the time will come when I maun break it to poor Morison. I am doubting that this cruel world will do that before me; and that when he masters wi’ the strong hand, and maybe with the strong mind, some sumpn whose parents have not erred, the name that disnae become me to utter will be applied to him, and my bairn will hae his heart broken—or his neck—for he’s as wilful as the north wind and will never put up with it.”

Jeanie Rabson knew not well what to say.—“Mary,” she at length murmured rather than uttered audibly, “the world disnae think sae seriously as ye do in this matter. There was the great house of Nithsdale itself; what a tumble it would have got frae the Johnstones, hadnae the

hand of a bastard son held it up! I trow, when he stormed Lochwood castle and mounted the foremost, married valour was in the rear of bold Robin Maxwell. And what's mair, was he wedlock born, lass, that came owre the sea wi' a clan of Normans at his back—the Roldans were amang them, sae there's nae lie in the matter—and took the crown of England, and put it on his head as bauldly and wi' as mickle honour as if he had been born till't?—Hout, lass, put the cloud frae yere brow, and dry your een; the time may come yet when the faut o' his birth will be an increase of his merit, an' ye will be ane of the proudest mithers of the land."

"God send it may be sae!" said Mary; "but now I have nae mair to say. Ye see the cause that made me put the bairn in hoddern gray; his hamely dress will no seem to be presuming, and the scholars may forget the faut o' his birth; but, O! I doubt he'll remind them with his merit."

"That's the best thing that can happen, lass," returned Jeanie. "But now if Morison be ready I'll see him to the school, and maybe say a word in season to the Dominie: he was ane of my joes, lass, and I can twist him yet round my wee finger." The boy, who it is likely was waiting for this,

made his appearance in a moment ; and Jeanie, taking him by the hand, walked away towards the residence of the Dominie, which lay a Scotch mile to the south.

Morison was all new-found joy, and new-awakened delight : he was like a bird hitherto confined to the nest ; but the growing of whose wings tempted it out to the twig, and showed the balmy wilderness—its future inheritance—before it. With the Elfin-glen, and all that was in it : from its topmost crag to the bottom of its deepest pool, he was as familiar as the sun that shone on it daily. He had visited the nest of the blood-crow, on its hereditary tree, where no creature without wings had ever before ventured. He had sauntered into all the intricacies and sinuosities of the Elfin-cavern, though Nanse Halberson assured him it was not only haunted, but that unless he could repeat the goblin's watchword who held it, the sides would close and he would be shut up for ever. Nay, child as he was, he had absolutely penetrated as far as FINIS, in certain old books of divinity, which lay in his mother's house, in which the males of the name of Morison read resolutely on Sundays, and with which the females during the rest of the week subdued their rebellious linen.

With all these matters Jeanie made herself acquainted as she walked Morison away to the Dominie's establishment.

On reaching the school, which consisted of two rooms, one for the scholars and the other for the master, a loud humming sound was heard, which seemed to issue from door, from windows, nay, from the roof of this humble dwelling.

“ We are owre late,” said Jeanie, “ the bairns are at thieir lessons. O, it’s pleasing now to hear the sound of sae mony innocent tongues, all targ-
ing away at the scripture—bide a wee ! I could wager, by the sort of rough unmusical din, that they are on the twelfth chapter of Nehemiah. Eh lad ! if ye could but read with the feeling and the grace o’ yere mother ye wad bang them a’. And I wish ye may, though I shouldna say that either, seeing that my ain second cousin’s bairns are amang them.”

Jeanie tapped at the door, the multitudinous sound of voices ceased at once ; the door opened, and Dominie Milligan stood before them with the open bible in one hand, and his sceptre of rule in the other, viz., five formidable thongs of leather, hardened at the tips by means of fire, and bound carefully with green silk thread to a handle of elder-wood—a present from a step-

father, as an atonement for sending two refractory children.

“ Eh, Miss Jean Rabson, is this you ! ” exclaimed the Dominie, receiving the offered hand of the spinster, “ and who is this now ? This is a face, new to me ; but I like it, there’s thought on the brow, though there’s roguery on the lip.”

“ Weel Maister John,” said Jeanie, “ it maun be your task to bring out what’s on the brow, and keep down what’s in the lip : sae I commit the youngster to your hands ; not wi’ thae tawse in them though ; make him half as gude a scholar as you are yourself, and then he may brag the barony ;—keeping off Father Borthwick, who I hear is just a dungeon o’ leär.—There now, put the lamb into the fauld, and then we shall talk farther.” Morison held by Jeanie’s hand, and seemed loth to part. “ O ye want to say something ; weel, what is it ? naebody hears but ourselves.”

“ If ye gang in by the Elfin-cottage,” said he, “ gie my two pet thrushes some meat ; I neglected them in my haste ; and tell my mother no be feared for me, nor grieve when she’s by herself, nor sing sad songs ony mair.”

To do all this Jeanie promised, more with

looks than words, for the feeling of the boy affected her.

The Dominie put the lamb into his fold, amid the questioning looks and titter of his scholars, and returned to Miss Jean Rabson, as he loved to call her.

“Now, Maister John,” said Jeanie, “I see ye scarcely ken that boy; it’s Morison Roldan; I love him like a drap of my ain blude, and he’s the son of mickle sorrow, and I maun say’t shame, for his mither was, aye, and is, bonnie Mary Morison, and his father—I winna gie him the name he deserves but the ane he gets, Lord Roldan.”

“Aye, a papist, and a malignant,” said the Dominie, “a wicked witty man, and of a bold race, and bloody.”

“Weel then,” said Jeanie, “there’s the greater need to mind this boy, for he is a Roldan every inch of him. Now ye maun keep the boys frae nicknaming him, first, for his ain sake, and secondly, for theirs, for he’s like a flaff of fire with thunder at the back on’t, I trow he’ll sort them; there’ll be bloody noses amang them as sure as ye are John Milligan, and I am Jean Rabson.”

“ The bairn shall be attended to, and dutifully nurtured, I will hold my hands about him, assuredly. But ye love to name yere maiden name, Miss Jean: see ! I have got a good school, and a good dwelling-house, with a fair garden ; will ye no be prevailed on to change yere name, and be mistress of the same ? It’s no just sae gude as to be wife of a minister, Jeanie, but it’s respectable, and it’s a post of God’s enjoining ; O that ye would but think so !”

“ Hout, Maister John, it’s better than to be a preacher on the mountain-tops ; wha wad be spouse, think ye to a wandering Cameronian, who sang psalms to-day at the foot of Queensbury, to-morrow, at the hip of Criffel, and on the third day, was at Banff. Be gude to this bairn o’ mine ; watch owre him, as if he were yere right ee ; and come ance a-week, if ye can, to Howeboddom, to tell us about it ; and then if it be written that I am to be mistress here, nae doubt it will be fulfilled ; but godsake, Maister John, quat my hand, somebody will see ! There’s Kate Wilson looking.”

The Dominie dropped her hand as if it had been red-hot iron, and in a moment was at his task in the school. The loud sound of learning—for lessons were learned audibly—then recom-

menced, and Jeanie turned her face to the Elfin-glen, muttering as she went along, “ I couldna marry Dominie Milligan, were I to die for refusing him. And yet I canna tell what ails me at him. If it be written that I am to be his wife, nae doubt, as I said, it will be fulfilled ; but the Dominie wi’ a’ his lear, will look lang before he finds it written ; unless it be in Chaldaic or Sclavonic : ” and she smiled at the conceit.

When Jeanie reached the Elfin-cot, she found Mary in the garden, deeply discomposed. “ Ye always come when I want ye maist,” said Mary ; “ see, what I have dug up in Morison’s little flower-border ; can ye read it, and interpret it ? ”

“ Read it ! ” exclaimed Jeanie, “ the blind may read it, it is the handwriting of God ; it is the Almighty taking the part of the helpless and the desolate—twenty pieces of round sound red gold. Mary, ye should kneel and thank Him. He sent food to Elijah, and two salmon to John Telfer, when he was wading the Dee to steal a sheep for his famishing babes ; and he sends red gold to Mary Morison, when she is in a weirscales about the education of her dear boy ; I can read it weel.”

“ Jeanie,” said she, “ ye read it like a friend ; but, alas ! do you read it right ? See here, and

here, and here," and she pointed to three distinct footprints in the garden ground. "That is writing I can read ; oh ! that I had never seen it." She grew pale as the lilies among which she was sitting, her head swam, and her eyes grew dim ; yet she did not faint, and was better before Jeanie, who, flying like a bird, brought water from the spring. "It is *his* footstep," she resumed, "I could know it among ten thousand ; and he has put his accursed gold here, that my bairn might find it, and that I might take it without much inquiry, and thus break the solemn, the sanctified vow of my life ;" and she wrung her hands, and seemed to reproach them for touching what she so much abhorred.

"Mary," said Jeanie, "let us talk calmly and cautiously about this ; but first let me feed my boy Morison's birds—I promised that—poorfallow he's kind-hearted baith to bird and beast, for these are twa gorlins that he saved frae the gled.—Now I have pacified them, poor things, and we are at the fireside ; for, d'ye ken, I dislike discussing secrets in the open air ; and that reminds me to tell you that Dominie Milligan will be kind and eyedant about the bairn, by this token, that he offered to make me mistress of his house and kaleyard, and is to come up to Howeboddom to

speak about it ; sae ye see I have a hank owre him—od ! he'll make our boy a capital scholar."

" I am thankful. But O dear, kind, good Jeanie, do tell me what I am to do, now, touching this money."

" Just do naething at all," said her adviser ; " why, ye are as afraid of the gold as if it wad bite or sting ye. I'll take the serpent whilk ye dug up to our James ; and if he thinks we can use it, and with wisdom on our side gie Morison a lift at college, why then we may do it safely ; for he'll advise nought but what's for your good name. Ye ken he aye liked to see ye, and to hear ye speak, Mary ; and ance when ye ca'd me sister in yere daffin, I wish ye had but seen his look when I tauld him. But ye dinna like this, sae let it pass."

" Your brother is a noble creature, and you are his full sister, Jeanie," said Mary, with a composed look ; " but, oh ! to think that Lord Roldan should, in the mirkness of the night ance mair, lay his snares for the helpless, sticks in my heart, and I canna forget it."

Jeanie rose, and then sat ; rose again, went to the door, looked east, west, north, and south ; then returning, sat down, and said, with a low, earnest voice, " There's not a soul coming ! Now, Mary,

did ye no ken that Lord Roldan has oftener than either ance or twice walked round the Elfin-cottage, up the Elfin-glen, and through the Elfin-cavern, like a troubled ghost, at the hollow hour of midnight? He has been seen, and that by ane who never deceived either me or any body else, gaun daunering and loitering—tarrying by this bower—lingering by that rock, and looking like a spirit charmed by some strong enchantment. Mary, did ye no ken of this?"

" If ye believe I did, Jeanie Rabson," replied Mary, " then I'll say nae mair, but from this hour henceforth live on my own thoughts, commune with no one, but suspect all human kind."

" No, Mary, I dinna believe the tale; had I believed it, I kenna what I would have done: for the arms of that boy, Morison, are kinched round my very heart. I didna believe it, but all other folk believed it save our James and me; I have heard them dilate on it, Mary, lass, and gie every thing a malicious twist, till my fingers langed to gie their necks a throwing. It was but yestern, nae farther gane, that that bottled up snake—I dinna remember her name—my lady's attendant, Sour Plooms—ye ken her weel enough—said, in my hearing, that Madam Prudence, of the Elfin-glen, was na sae prudent as some folk thought, and

that the footsteps that were seen in the snow seven long years ago, were to be seen among the dew of the place still."

"I was ignorant of all," replied Mary, "and wish I had remained so. But what is this?"

The object which occasioned this exclamation was no other than Dominie Milligan, marching towards the glen at the head of his scholars—a band not at all numerous; for on the first day of the school they did not exceed a score and a half. He halted them by the side of the stream, he then conducted them among the hazel-bushes, where flowers and herbs grew thick and rank, and pausing at Mary's garden, appeared to direct their attention to the neat flower-beds, the rows of herbs and the fruit-trees, which at once performed the part of hedge and orchard. What all this could mean, Jeanie could not imagine; but, accompanied by Mary, she went forth to the Dominie. He was not slow in stating the object of his visit.

"These are my bairns," said he, "whom Providence has sent me to instruct, and this beautiful glen is my school in which they will learn a lesson. It is true that I have a place with a slated roof and with seats of deal, where my children study the scriptures and wise books written by

pious men: but God never intended that we should ponder only on his written word; hath he not set lessons to us on every hill, and in every vale, on every tree, and in every stream. All creation is a sacred volume—a vast bible—and yon sun and the light of reason in our minds, are the candles by which we read and interpret it. A book is but a dead letter till we compare it with the living and breathing world. Seek for God, therefore, in the flowers of the field, the fish of the stream, the fowls of the air, and the clouds which pass over heaven. Read much and know little—read little and know less. Do I speak riddles? I thus explain them: He who reads much will not have leisure to study living nature, and must therefore see through the eyes of others; he who reads little, and studies not the breathing earth around him, will know next to nothing; but he who knows most, is the man that reads books and the animated page of creation time and time about, compares the one with the other, and forms his own conclusions. To know books only, is to look at a gum-flower instead of a balmy rose: to admire the painted water of the stage, and slight that silver stream before you, in which the spotted trouts dart to and fro, and which sings and freshens the land as

it flows. No, my children, I shall not do you the injustice to keep you from contemplating God in his works. I shall lead you often forth, and explain to you the seasons as they come, with all that comes in their train ; the flowers with their beauty, the herbs with their qualities, the masonry of the birds and bees, and the toil of the farmer, who, in his labours walks hand in hand with God, and fulfils his purposes and intentions."

"I shall be tempted to become a scholar, too," said Jeanie. "He's a wonderfu' man, this Dominie Milligan."

CHAPTER V.

His daring hope no sire's example bounds,
His first-born flight no prejudice confounds.

SAVAGE.

DOMINIE MILLIGAN was an enthusiast, and readily communicated, like fire touching tinder, his own spirit, to such of his scholars as were at all mentally gifted: they grappled with the severest tasks, and mastered the longest lessons, not because it was the pleasure of the master, but from being delightful to themselves. How his eye brightened, and how his heart expanded, and how the mercury of his enthusiasm rose over a lad of spirit and promise; nor was he slack in discovering fit recruits for what he called his grenadiers; he watched on all the effect of his favourite passages of scripture or poesy, and as they were affected, he drew conclusions regarding their sensibility and fancy. He was, however, the worst of all possible masters for the

inapt and the dull ; he made what he called an onset, on them, by both sap and storm ; and when he found that he had not the art to rouse them, he gave up the attack. He delighted to see them puzzled and perplexed by the commonest questions ; he would clap them on the head, and say, “ Clever fellow ! what a fine head ; 'tis as hard as a millstone, and as thick as a bomb-shell ; I marvel that hair has grown upon it ; you will be driving the dung-cart when lads like Morison there, will be riding in a coach and six.”

Such sentiments and discipline, were not at all acceptable to children that happened to be slow and sluggish ; but they were welcome to all of active minds and quick apprehensions ; the barony was therefore divided on his merits, and Dominie Milligan, while he was caressed by one family, ran a risk of being stoned by another.

A deputation of the heads of families of the satisfied and the aggrieved visited him on the third month of his ministration, regarding the mysterious rules of instruction. He heard them lay down the law, that a master should be alike kind and anxious about all ; that he should restrain the too impetuous ; urge—one of them said, “ flog up the sluggish ; and thus have all

bright, like halfpence worn in the pocket and shining through frequent handling."

The Dominie looked on all this as heresy ; he turned up the whites of his eyes ; a little wart on his right eyelid became agitated, and he exclaimed, "Are ye wiser than the Most High ? Has he not made some bright and some dull ? and who can, by polishing, turn a gray granite stone into a shining diamond. To the quick and the clever, the doors of ambition are opened wide ; learning lends them wings to rise, and they rise, and lighten the land around like new-created stars. To the dull and the leaden-headed all ways are closed save the way to the dunghill ; the little learning which is forced upon them, becomes as wings of lead, and the only light which they follow, is that of the will-o'-wisp, to drown them in a puddle, for they have not the sense to creep out of a spoonful of water."

The deputation departed, one half of them saying, the master was a born fool, a predestined gomeral ; the other, that he was a wonderful being, a miracle of learning, and was just the very man for making ministers for the pulpit. The Dominie nevertheless sometimes erred in his estimates of intellect. On the same day that Morison Roldan joined the school, a clouterly

boy, some year and a half older, the son of a shepherd, and by name David Gellock, was admitted. Morison soon climbed to the top of the class, and though he was now and then trapped down, he quickly regained his place. Not so honest Davie; he was placed low at first, and instead of rising, dropped down and down, till he was foot all but one—for a boy, to whom Providence had given such intense obtuseness of intellect, that he went by the name of the Millstone-head, held, as by right of inheritance, the place of dult. Davie's descent in the class at length incensed the Dominie so much, that he placed him on that unwelcome eminence, the repentance-stool, and gave him a hard lesson to learn;—he occupied the seat for some three minutes, and put on an aspect as hard as flint, but it would not do—he burst into tears, sprang to the floor, and saying, with a violent sob, “O ! Morison man, speak for me !” doggedly resumed his former seat in the class. Morison looked at the Dominie, and would fain have spoken.

“ Ye need not speak boy, your look's enough,” said the master, “ there are sparkles of fire in that moorland flint, but it must be stricken hard. Go on with your class, David, you may ride on

a horse yet, but never in a chariot, unless Morison will take ye into his."

In Morison the Dominie found a scholar to his mind: he learned all the school-lessons, and longed for more; every new book opened up fresh sources of knowledge; he read history, he talked history, and, as his mother said, he dreamed history. Poetry next spread out its charms: he could not, indeed, endure it at first; but rather marvelled what kind of strange composition it was. Accident threw in his way a black-letter folio, full of our old rhymed romances: their chivalry bewitched him; he did not, indeed, much admire the encounters with giants and hypogriffs; but all deeds of daring were acceptable to his heart; and he could repeat Sir Eger, Sir Graham, and Sir Gray Steel, from end to end—and was inclined to do so when some of his audience did any thing but wish it. But he did not linger among the scenes of history, and lily-beds of song, to the neglect of other duties; he wrought his way through all the rules of arithmetic with little pleasure, but with great rapidity. Mathematics seemed thistly at first; but when he discovered how much they aided accuracy of thought, and how necessary they were in the movements and combinations of war, he gave up his heart and head to them, and soon overtook the knowledge of his master.

Morison did not, however, reach the head of the classes in the school, for a season or two; nor did he attain such honours without sharp contests, nor enjoy them without labour and toil. We do not mean that he had to maintain his ascendancy by study and quickness of parts alone; no! he was obliged to vindicate his right to be dux by strength of arm and courage out of school: and in this he found a faithful auxiliary in Davie Gellock. Those who had lost stations in the class were sometimes willing to show that their arms were more powerful than their intellects, and desirous of satisfying Morison that he was not superior in all things. Davie scarcely waited for the commencement of hostilities; he owed Morison the value of many a hard lesson, and longed for the hour of repayment; nay, ventured sometimes to anticipate his friend, and once or twice had all but to fight Morison for presuming to meddle with his prey. Strange books, bloody noses, and torn coats, were three things common to the Elfin-cottage; and had not Jeanie Rabson taken Morison's part on more occasions than one, he would have tasted the rebuke of both his mother's hand and tongue. When, indeed, any thing disastrous befel him, he made his way to Howeboddon; and Jean's skill with the needle, or soothingness of tongue, were alike useful in his

cause. “O Mary, woman,” was her wonted song, “ye have muckle reason to be proud; he’s a grand creature, this Morison of ours! I could beg my bread with the bairn, I love him sae weel. He’ll be a shining light yet. Hout! tell nae me about his plays and pranks: wad ye hae him to sit like a sautpowk, ay, at the ingle side? I never saw ony gude come o’ a fusionless sumph.”

But there were others who refused to look on the pranks, and talents, and the scholarship of Morison with the kindly eyes of Jeanie Rabson. Some accused his mother of a design to raise her love-begot laddie owre the heads of those who came regularly to the world, under the sanction of the kirk and in the terms of an act of parliament. Nay, one or two, scrupled not to attribute not a little blame to Providence, for having done more for Morison, in the way of good looks and gifts of mind, than he had done for the sons of douce folk, who read the scriptures regularly, dosed in the pews on Sunday, and served him in the strict legal meaning of devotion. We have no wish to say what half the vale and much of the upland said; because, a spiteful satirist imputes envy to the virtuous when they rail, and it is impossible that such antiquated spinsters as

Nickie Neevison, and Sour Plooms, and Jane Juniper of the Halliday-hill could envy Mary in the gladness of having such a son ; for they were too strict and heedful in the ways in which they walked to seek an honour which involved a fault.

There were others, who in indulging the same amiable feeling, went a cannier way to work : they acknowledged that Morison was “ baith gude and clever ; but then see what his mother, poor foolish creature, was bringing the laddie to ! No content that he should crest it up wi’ the best born, in suits of green, and ruffles, and such like falderrals—just as if his father had asked the kirk’s leave when he begat him—but she maun have him to speak Latin words and Greeks, and blauds o’ poetry, as if he were parson and play-actor baith in a breath ; and then that half demented bodie, Dominie Milligan, keeps up the delusion, and—would ye believe it ?—says that Morison Roldan kens mair at fourteen than some ken at four-and-twenty.”—“ I wonder to hear ye make sae mickle about a rumlegarie, light-headed, helleck of a lad like that,” said John Howet of Hurley-rigg. “ He’s a born fool : ae hour ye’ll hear him raving till he’s hoarse, clean off-loof nonsense of his ain ; anither hour, ye’ll see him drawing daft-like lines on the linn sands, whilk

he calls his battle-plans and his mathematical modes of taking towns: but bide a wee! afore ye hae well done marvelling at the nonsense of the thing, ye'll hear a shout whilk ye wad think came frae the plover or the curlew, and wha is it but the gowk callant, sitting on the tap-most stane of Glengarnock auld tower, where never a ane dare venture, save the goshawk and himself. The boy's fairlymoidert and winnel-skewed wi' reading fule books—I wad speak to the mither o' him, but I am no just sure that a man who looks to be an elder will help on his ain preferment by being seen hand and glove wi' ane that was ance loose, and may never mair be sicker."

It is likely that some such thoughts, as those expressed by Hurley-rigg, had crossed the mind of Mary Morison; for on the very first half-holiday which the school afforded, when her son had brought all his books from the classes and had gone away to help honest Davie to rob a hunting hawk's nest in the old tower of Glengarnock, she summoned Jeanie Rabson, and declared her determination to hold an inquest on the books which were, she feared, robbing her bairn of his wits. Jeanie assented to be one of the judges, and, just as they were commencing the

task, they were joined by Nanse Halberson. She was invited to become a critic; and the three laid their heads together to separate the righteous volumes from the unrighteous, and leave no book on Morison's shelves capable of leading him like a will-o'-wisp into the mire of verse, or of "filling his noddle," as Jeanie Rabson said, "wi' the idea of becoming a Sir William Wallace, or a Black Douglas, or waur than a Sir Gray Steel—what Steels could he be of—the Steels of Steelston are a wauf race, and the Steels of Skin-anbirn are little better."

Each of the three judges, like the editors of three critical reviews in these our latter days, when some new poet or other perplexes them by deviating into originality from the beaten path of opinion, sought to justify herself from any share in the imputed error.—"I have been watchful of the boy," said Mary; "and all the books which I allowed him to look at beside the bible were the Pilgrim's Progress and Robinson Crusoe."—"And I," said Jeanie Rabson, "gave him The Afflicted Man's Best Companion, and the Letters of that sound divine Rutherford, whilk are like flowers, and contain honey for the wild bee as well as for the tame."—"And I," quoth Nanse Halberson, "gied him that graceful pas-

toral, *The Gentle Shepherd* ;—a volume of gude auld Scottish sangs, whilk our douce grandmothers sang ; by and attour a mickle black book, ful o' blacker print and romantic stories—no printed to mislead, but to amuse and to shorten a lang darksome night?"—"I have my own doubts about the latter book," said Mary ; "but let us look into them one by one. There's a volume to you Nanse, there's another to you Jeanie, and I'll dip into this one myself."

Jeanie Rabson spoke first : "This," said she, "maun be a book of verse, for the lines are short and long, and ragged at the end, like a beggar's blanket ; it is called *The Cherrie and the Slae* : it's a lang dreigh story ; the sweet cherrie is sin, and the sour slae virtue—a capital thing for Madam Sour Plooms, up bye yonder. But oh ! to read through it for the sake of three lines of moral, is like climbing a tree seven miles high for the sake of ae apple. Ye needna dread this book ; it will do naebody ony harm."

"I canna just say sae mickle for my ane, then," said Mary ; "but the gude rule at ae end is a set-off against the misrule at the other. Here's sic a scene o' daffin and dauncing and drinking as I never read the like o' ; and then the painting of the hale is as bright as sunshine,

and the language seems as if it were dancing to a tune. Christ's Kirk on the Green, is the name o't ; and the other is called The Gudewife of Auchtermuchty, there's right domestic discipline in it ; and then the moral and the drolling rin hand in hand, and reel and set to ane anither. The bairn maun have laughed loudly at this : I trow he could take nae skaith frae sic compositions."

" And mine," said Nanse Halberson, " is a sanctified work : Rutherford's Letters, nae less. Ye have nae idea how warmly the reader is called on to caress the kirk ; to take her round the neck, and salute her, and touzle her weel for salvation's sake."

" O Nanse," said Jeanie, " ye're a queer expositor of types and symbols : but I'm thinking I had better tak the book hame wi' me ; young blood and ignorant eyes are apt to make mistakes, and think the good divine is talking of less sanctified things than kirks and synods."

While these three female judges are busy with the little library, giving one volume to honour and another to dishonour, let us follow Morison and Davie to what we may call the adventure of the hawk ; seeing that this tyrant of the air had constructed her chamber, and reared

her young, in a situation so lofty and perilous that no one had hitherto succeeded in climbing to her eyrie. An old tower, called the Peel of Glengarnock, overlooked the bay: it was square, with a ditch and fence-wall, and considered impregnable, till a feud with the house of Maxwell brought two thousand warriors against it, who made it a habitation for ravens and owls. The turreted stair was broken close by the wall, the vaulted floors were gone, and nothing stood, save a ragged skeleton, in the most tottering part of which a hunting hawk had her nest, with four young ones, fledged, and all but fit for flight.

Morison had something like a dawning notion that he was connected with the owner of the ruined tower, and the estate whereon it stood; but his birth and relationship were matters shunned by his mother and avoided by Jeanie Rabson; so much so that he hardly knew that a stain was on his birth, or that the word bastard had an insulting meaning. The unwelcome feeling occasionally intruded itself that his mother had not the same station in the world as other dames who had children; and once, in real simplicity of soul, he sent the colour from her cheek by inquiring what kind of child a natural child was.

our vulgar. why not say, ³

His schoolfellows, with most of whom he was a favourite, were unacquainted with the refined systems of annoyance practised in more lordly seminaries: they were sons of shepherds or of ploughmen, with whom the bar sinister was scarcely a blot. A lame foot, a hand with three fingers, or a squint, were objects rather of kindness than of scorn: and Morison had yet to learn that the laws of man, though not of nature, interfered between him and a wide inheritance. The two adventurers soon reached the ruin, ascended with the lightness of winged creatures the jagged and ragged wall, and gained the foot of the central tower, which, rising to the height of thirty feet above the parapets, overlooked the country for many miles.

But at the foot of the central tower Davie's courage failed: he had never before been so high in the air, and as he looked on the rolling sea and on the daisied sod, some sixty feet beneath, he wished himself safely down, and declared that he had not a head that would carry him further. He therefore descended, and awaited below the return of Morison from the falcon tower, as it was called, in allusion to its tenant. The dizzy summit was soon scaled, and, with a couple of young hunting hawks secured

in his cap, he began to descend on the other side from that on which he had ascended, for the purpose of examining the ruin. He now remembered that in country story the falcon tower was haunted ; lights had been seen there at night ; some had heard sounds, and one even swore to the waving of a hand, and the glance of a robe of scarlet. A narrow aperture, in which an oak door still kept its hinges, led into it ; Morison pushed it up, and entered :—

He started back, and his first emotion was to fly, for there, on a stone seat, like a watcher of old, and leaning on a table, sat a handsome man with books open before him and a brace of pistols richly inlaid and shining in their polish. He gazed on Morison, and said sharply, “ How dare you climb here, and rob my hawk-nests ? ”

“ I have harried the hawk’s nest,” answered Morison, “ because the old one—I know her by her blue wings—killed my mother’s hen-birds ; and maybe, I have another reason.”

“ Let me hear reason the second,” said the stranger, looking at the youth as if he would have looked him through.

“ Ou just,” replied he, “ because the young laird of Knockhoolie said I durst na do’t ; but I’ll put the birds into the nest again if ye like,

for it would be a pity to rob them of their mother's bosom and warm wing, and their free course in the air."

Morison was about to reascend the turret, when the stranger stopped him and said, "Nay my boy, that would peril thy bones twice; I shall tame one of these hawks for thee.—What! you object to that? Well what is it you wish?"

"If you tame one for me," said Morison, "you must let me give it to Davie Gellock, for I promised him one, if he would accompany me to the tower."

"And where is this friend of thine?" inquired the stranger.

"He is at hand," said Morison; but on looking for him, he was nowhere to be seen. He called his name once—twice—thrice, till the ruin rang again, but Davie did not make his appearance. "Oh, he will have fallen and killed himself!" exclaimed the other: "and what will his father say, and what shall I say to my mother?" and he sprang towards the shattered staircase, and down he went with the quickness of a cat. When he reached the ground, the stranger was there before him. How he descended Morison had no time to inquire; for a scream, wild and fearful was uttered by Davie, who starting

from among the shattered arches, fled, with the speed of a hunted deer, and was out of sight in a moment.

“He takes you, sir,” said Morison, “for a ghost or a wraith, which they say haunts this old tower, and he will run home, and tell that I am taken and torn to pieces.”

“And what do you take me for?” said the stranger, with a louring look. “You saw that I did not follow you, and yet I reached the ground before you.”

“You are no ghost, for all that,” said Morison; “though had I seen you at night, up in yon howlet-room, I shouldna have known what to say. You are a man. I have read that whoso is more than man, is a god; but ye are nae god—your feet sound as you walk; you nearly fell over that stone.”

“You are a strange boy,” said the querist; what is your name and who are your parents?”

“My name is Morison Roldan, and my mother lives in the Elfin-glen.”

The stranger turned his head away, and remained silent for a little while.—“The Elfin-glen!” he muttered to himself; “well I know its romantic caverns and its flowery nooks, and often do I see it, when the moon and stars light me.”

Tell me boy," he said aloud, " do you know the Elfin-cave, with the little spring well in the corner, and garlands of honeysuckle hung at the entrance?"

" Oh yes! I go there once a-year with my mother ;—it is in the autumn season : she grows sad and seems ill about something ; but after she has sat a while looking at one place of the cavern and praying in another, and muttering the name of some one ; she grows more composed, and returns home. She will tell me, she says, the story of the cavern, some time. I am glad that she refuses to tell me now."

" Why so ?" inquired the stranger.

" Because," said Morison, " I am but a boy, and there may be some wrong to right. But I maun go home, for Jeanie Rabson, of Howebodom will be there, and I maun see her ; for she is like anither mither to me."

The stranger whistled twice ; two lackeys made their appearance. " Here," said he ; " rear and train these hawks ; they are from the falcon tower ; one of them is for this youth." They took the hawks and vanished. " Here child," he continued, " take this purse ; and when any one asks you where you got it, say, the man of the haunted tower gave it to you : I shall see thee soon again."

He turned round as he spoke ; and Morison rejoicing at his release, imitated Davie, and bounded off, but more in gladness than in fear ; for there was something in the look and voice of the stranger which filled his mind, and allowed him to think of nothing else till he reached the entrance of the Elfin-glen.

“ Hilloa ! Morison,” shouted Davie Gellock ; “ what a wonderful deliverance ! They’ll look wi’ clear een that will catch me hunting for hawks about haunted towers again. What a mercy that it didna confine ye in the turret, and keep ye there to feed the hawks wi’ ! ”

“ And do ye think,” inquired Morison, “ that it was na flesh and blood ? ”

“ Flesh and blood ! ” exclaimed Davie ; “ when could flesh and blood flee down seventy feet, perpendicular, as he did, and rise without sair banes ? He was a gruesome ghaist, wi’ hair like a heather cewe, and tusks like the linchpins o’ a cart.”

Ere they arrived at the Elfin-cottage, the in-quest on Morison’s little library closed in these words. “ Here’s a book,” said Jeanie Rabson, “ that we had nearly overlooked ; it’s *The Seasons*, James Thomson ; and tells us that there are flowers in spring, sunshine in summer, corn in

harvest, and snow in winter ; nevertheless, there is a wonderful beauty of expression about it ; but he has tried to relate the blessed story of Ruth, and failed for lack of memory."

" Weel, ye see," said Nanse, " the bairn is a wise bairn after all ; and saving Peden's Prophecies, which are nonsense, and Satan's Invisible World Discovered, which is lies, and Gulliver's Travels, which are baith, his books are a' gude books ; but as for these three, spare them not, say I."

" And I am of the same opinion," said Jeanie ; " but I wad add Valentine and Orson, Sir Eger, Sir Graham, and Sir Gray Steel ; True Thomas, and The Queen of Elfland, and all the race of wild tales, to the number : if they are true, they are sae marvellous as to form nae example ; and if they are lies, they are sic unlikely anes that they should be burned. But, Mary lass, the sun is going down, and I maun hame to the kye." On this she left the cottage, accompanied by Nanse Halberson.

Morison found his mother replacing the books in his little chamber. " Bless thee ! my son," said Mary, " what ails ye ? Come in, and sit down, and tell me all what has happened—ye look as if ye had conversed with a ghaist."

“That’s what Davie says,” answered Morison; “but when was a ghost visible in daylight; and what ghost ever carried a brace of silver-mounted pistols; and what ghost ever reads a book; and more than that, did ye ever hear of ghost that had gold in his waistcoat-pocket? Even Nanse Halberson, that kens a’ the ghost stories, has na a tale like that.”

“And wha,” said Davie, “ever heard of human flesh and blood dwalling in the topmost pinnacle of Glengarnock Peel; of human flesh and blood that could flee down through the air, like a robin redbreast, seventy feet, if it’s an inch, and light on its ain feet; and when did aught of this world glowre wi’ twa saucer een, and laugh wi’ teeth like tether stakes?”

“Saucer een and teeth like tether stakes!” exclaimed Morison; “I was face to face wi’ him, and ought to ken he was a very handsome man, about the age of my mother; and though he came down from the falcon tower faster than I came, I be-think me now that I heard the sound of descending feet in the heart of the wall near me. He kens all about our glen here, and asked me about the Elfin-cavern, where my mother likes to sit for hours and hours together.”

“Weel, weel, keep your ain opinion, and I’ll

keep mine," said Davie, stoutly ; "but I'll off hame before dark." And away he started ; turning now and then to look back at the haunted tower, which rose gray and grim in the distance.

Mary Morison rose and looked out on the vale ; she then closed the door of the chamber, and with tottering knees and a face cold and colourless as marble, said, "Have ye told me all, Morison, my bairn ?"

"No, mother," answered the youth ; "but it's soon told." He then related his interview with the stranger, the words that passed between them, and described his appearance.

"Be mair particular wi' the stranger's looks," said Mary ; "for mickle depends on it."

"He was of the middle size and mair ; his een were deep and dark ; his brow high and clear ; his colour paler than common ; and when he spoke, he lisped a little."

"It's he ! 'tis he himself," said Mary ; these are true tokens ; and then his complexion—it was once of the brightest ; but foreign suns and foreign follies will stain the purest red and white. What said he about the Elfin-cavern ; d'ye remember his very words ?"

"He asked me if I knew it, and had observed

its little spring, and the summer garlands at the entrance; and he muttered something about kenning it weel, and visiting it when naething sees him, save the moon and stars."

She hid her face in her hands, but the tears, large and hot trickled fast through between her fingers. "I winna let the belief enter, and charm my soul again," said she, recovering herself; "he forsook me, and when ae word that is registered baith aboon and below, and which earth demanded, would have cleared me with the world and done justice—justice to thee, my helpless boy—he refused to speak that word—that little word—"

"When I am a man, I will make him speak it, mother!" said Morison, "though it should peril my heart's blood."

Mary rose from her seat, opened the chamber-window, allowing the summer air mingled with the light of the descending sun, to stream freely and refreshingly in, and shedding back the thick shining hair from the forehead and temples of her boy, over which they wandered disordered, she said, "Alas! my child, ye will but augment the misery, which ye desire to lessen: I seek avengement at no one's hand, and least of all,

at thine ; and have I not my revenge ? Am I not happy and prosperous ? Is not my son not only the first in all things—looks as well as mind, but does he not promise to take rank among the wise, the pious, and the eloquent ? Look at him who wronged us—is he not unhappy ? Does he not seek in far foreign lands for the peace denied him by his follies in this ; and does he not hurry home again for the peace he is denied abroad ? I am avenged, aye more than I desired.”

“ Mother, mother ! ” said Morison, “ of whom speak you ? he whom I saw in the old tower I never beheld before—he is a stranger ; of whom do you speak ? ”

Mary took down her bible, and turning to the title-leaf, pointed to the blank in the entry of her son’s birth—“ My child,” she said, “ you once asked me whose name should fill that space—bring me pen and ink.” She took the pen, and after ‘ Morison, son of Mary Morison,’ wrote calmly and in a beautiful hand—‘ Lord Roldan.’

“ And mother, is Lord Roldan my father ? ” inquired Morison.

“ He is,” exclaimed Lord Roldan, opening the door of the chamber, “ he is, and is come to say so—would that he had done so sooner.”

Mary, who had started at first, and made a step as if she would have fled, looked on him, and said, “Have you yet more to say?”

“Yes Mary, much:—I have to ask forgiveness of thee, for the manifold injuries I have done, and to bid thee be happy; come with me to another land—come, where there are no bigoted mothers, and contemptible etiquette, to which, as to an idol, I must bow here. Come, and a life devoted to thee and thine, shall show the world that Lord Roldan is not unworthy of his first and only love.”

“I have heard something like all this from you before, my lord,” said Mary; “but speak plainly; the way which I must go now lies through the church, when the minister of God is there! Lord Roldan knows whether that is the way he means, or no.”

His lordship was silent for a moment. “Mary,” he said, “are we never to understand each other? Am I doomed to wither away like a flower half cut by the mower and drooping to the sun? Am I doomed to print my footsteps round the house of her whom I love when all are asleep, and to meet with no requital? Mary, if you were to see me sitting for hours at midnight in that lonesome cavern, living over

again hours of departed love, and imagining in every wave of the honeysuckle garlands at the entrance, and in every sweet sound, that I hear your coming footsteps, and see your form—sylph-like, and even in its shadow beautiful—you would pity me, nor refuse the request of one who will not believe that he is not yet dear to you.”

“ My lord,” replied Mary, with a voice that had lost all its agitation, “ you are but wasting words, and hindering me from working. I have a task to perform—a task needful at first for the support of my son and myself, and now performed as a duty, that I may fulfil the high purposes for which I am educating him. Be so good as retire, therefore ; it is sufficient that I have taken my resolution.”

“ And I have taken mine,” replied Lord Roldan: “ here I abide till you consent to go with me—my ship sails to-morrow. Come, come, Mary,” he said, in a more indifferent tone, “ do not queen it too much ; we were acquainted in other days, you know. Yon cavern has its love legends as well as its goblin tales : you did not always look so scornful on me.” And he sat down suddenly, and seemed disposed to remain.

“ My lord,” said Mary, “ you desire me not

to queen it too much. Queen it ! I ought to fall on my knees, and ask assistance from God against a demon ! You broke every vow, and they were many ; you broke every oath, and you know they were numerous ; you withheld or destroyed all testimony to my honour—nay, you refused even to own that weeping boy, but left him to the mercy of a wintry world, and the support of a helpless mother ! I thought you had summed up the whole evil you intended to do me in those bitter deeds : but no—experience has increased your powers of mischief, and lo ! you are here to insult me with your contemptible love, and give the world cause to suspect the sincerity of my repentance. I bid you begone, my lord : tempt me not too far.

“ There is very ruddy blood in thy veins, Mary ; still it is but churl’s blood, and these tragic airs do not become thee—but what means the boy ? ”

As he said this, Morison, who had hitherto stood gazing, one moment on Lord Roldan, then on his mother, and wondering what all this mystical language meant, dashed down the purse of gold which he had received at the feet of Lord Roldan, saying, “ Take it back ! no

good can come from it. Mother, mother, dinna mind that insulting man ; I will never ask for a father again. No one shall be a father to me that gars you greet."

"O, my ain, my dear-bought bairn !" said Mary, clasping him to her bosom ; "I did a sinful deed in other days, and oh ! I have done one of folly to-day. No sooner did I write down 'Lord Roldan' in my blessed father's bible, than, as if it had been a spell, it raised a demon—lo ! there he sits mocking and insulting me."

"Beware !" said his lordship, in a low hollow voice, "the demon of whom you speak can act as well as look."

"Alas ! I know it my lord," replied Mary ; but even against that I am not unprovided : the blood of Halbert Morison is in my veins." She put her hand into her bosom. "I have at least one faithful friend in the world who will take my part and require small persuasion." Something glittered in her hand as she spoke.

"Mother, Mother," said Morison, "it is loaded with ball !—I examined it last night."

"And hast thou seen thy mother's friend, my boy ? For these fourteen melancholy years it has lain, I may say in my bosom, and been my protec-

tor. See! is it not a neat and a handsome thing? —one touch of my finger, and he who is come to insult me would do so no more."

Lord Roldan rose and said, "By the light of heaven! I would give half of my land, wert thou but of gentle blood. Now some dames would have screamed—some would have fainted—and some would have done I dare not well say what, had they been in thy place Mary: but Mary—my Mary of the Elfin-cave!—neither screamed nor fainted, but out she plucks what she calls her bosom friend, even a loaded pistol, and informs me that she stands protected. It was done with so natural air air, too! no earl's daughter could have done it with so much majesty. Farewell, for a while, Mary! it is lucky after all that two such spirits cannot be together."

"I will not always be a boy, sir," said Morison, touched by words half sarcastic.

Lord Roldan went away, and the mother and son were left alone to think of what had passed. Morison lay and sobbed in her bosom; at last he exclaimed, "It is better as it is: why should I want a father when I have such a mother? I have read of wondrous things done by desolate children; and I feel that God has more for me

to do in the world than to sit and wring my hands, and lament that I have not a father. Mother, I ken now what Will Lorburne meant when he called me bastard: I didna laugh nor yet did I cry, but all the boys looked at me and I looked at them. I wonder if he will call me that again?" And he clenched his hands, and his eyes lightened.

CHAPTER VI.

As bleak-faced Hallowmass returns,
They get the jovial ranting kirns ;
When rural life, in every station,
Unite in common recreation ;
Love blinks, wit slips, and social mirth
Forgets there's care upon the earth.

BURNS.

A FEW days after the events related in our last chapter Lord Roldan's barge with all its sails set, and the banner of his house flying, sailed out of the bay of Glengarnock, and bore his lordship away, to foreign parts ; there to do—so rumour said—much that was evil and little that was good.

“ But I wadna hae ony body to be owre sure that Lord Roldan's gane,” said that district authority Nickie Neevison ; “ he will come back the first high wind, or the first thunder-shower, as a’ the name come to the world ; and, speaking o’ names, has na he as gude as owned Mary Morrison’s bairn. My certie, kimmer will look owre her nose at us a’ now ! she was high enough before wi’ what Dominie Milligan, the demented

body, calls Morison's gifts—I wish they were but graces—the country winna contain her."

The prophecy of Nickie, like the prophecies of more renowned names in these our latter days of foreknowledge, was not soon fulfilled: high winds and loud thunder-storms came in their time; the seasons also revolved; nay, years passed by, and yet no one saw the much-looked-for barge return to the bay; nor did the pride of Mary Morison increase.

These were times of happiness and peace to Mary and her son: the former augmented her stock of household gear; her webs of fine linen, bleached among the gowans on the Elfin-burn bank grew numerous; so did her pieces of linsey-woolsey; nay, she procured the finest wool, and exerting her skill, spun it fine and evenly, and had it woven in the Cameronian loom of James Macgee, and dyed a sea-green colour in the vats of deacon Mitchelson, and all with the hope of rivalling the beauteous manufacture of the south: her money, too, actively won and prudently hoarded, increased fourfold; and through the agency of Jeanie Rabson, it was laid safely out at interest, "so that, Mary, woman," said her friend, "ye may sometimes sit idle, for the gowd is working while ye are sleeping."

But these matters did not grow and prosper more under her hands than Morison increased in beauty and grew in knowledge under the ministry of time and the tuition of Dominie Milligan. He was now in his seventeenth year : was tall of his age, well shaped, and active ; and had a blow, a smile, a kind word, or a sharp gibe for all, according to their deservings. The opprobrious word, bastard, had involved him in three different contests with boys above his own age ; and hard knocks were given and received, in two of which he was victor, and the third was interrupted by Davie Gellock, who, fearful for his friend, interposed by main force, and bestowed with his iron fists such a lesson on the enemy, that the word of shame was silenced in the school and in the field, and Morison reigned king in learning and in courage among the youth of Glengarnock.

“ It’s no,” said one of the unsuccessful champions, “ but ane might in the long run, by strata-gem and wile, conquer Morison, for he’s a flaff of fire ; but then we have to bide the brulzie next wi’ that dour deevil, Davie : his flesh is as hard as a reested ham—blood canna be drawn on’t —and then his neeves—I think I feel them ham-

mering under my short rib yet. I wonder what the two boys see in ane another?"

But as the stature of Morison grew, and his mind expanded, the feeling that he was basely born waxed with his person, and augmented with his mind;—he imagined he read it in every look, and heard it in every greeting. That Lord Roldan had wronged—grievously wronged—his mother, he had learned from both their lips; and reading books both divine and profane, historical and romantic, and conversing with the wise and the learned—for there is no vale in Scotland without its scholar, and no peasant without education—he became acquainted with the reasons of birth and rank which his father—he had never yet called him by that name—assigned for not having made Mary his lady; and though he made allowance for such prejudice, he could not but regard it as shallow, and not founded in nature, and considered himself as a martyr to an etiquette which he regarded as contemptible.

With these uneasy feelings there grew up a resolution to make up for the defect of his birth, by exerting all his faculties to render his name worthy of being remembered when distinguished men were named. How this was to come to pass

he had, indeed, no distinct notion : his dreams of ambition, like the figures in real dreams, had assumed no defined shape, and he was blindly groping his way, like Samson, to the columns which sustained rank, without being conscious that they would be shaken rudely, and that his own hand would be upon them. On looking around, he saw no outlet for his ambition : all the high places of the land were not only filled by men provided expressly by the grace of the throne and by act of parliament for them, but their successors were already intimated by the same legal process : it is true that the Constitution cried out, My doors are open to all, and no doubt it cried right ; but then, it meant men with money in their pockets : the words were uttered in vain in the ears of the clouterly sons of the husbandman and mechanic. The law, the church, the navy, and the army, were places tabooed by the hand of wealth, and quite inaccessible to poverty ; and though thousands were employed by Government in its departments, both at home and abroad, it was observed that by some obliquity of mind, men of genius were not thought fit to labour in the cause of the land which they adorned ; but that the dews of preferment fell upon those who could influence elections,

and whose hands contributed to keep the wheels of state corruption greased, so that they ran smoothly on the road to public perdition.

The situation as well as condition of Morison was unfavourable to his aspirations. His eye was confined by the hills which hemmed in Glengarnock; and though, as Davie Gellock hinted, there were very respectable folk, he was told, beyond them; yet how those people were employed, and of the multitudinous labourers of the city, he knew next to nothing. Poetry had, indeed, opened her charmed portal and given him a glimpse of paradise; but of the miracles of the pencil and the chisel he was ignorant; of that eloquence which shook the heart while it convinced the mind, he had but read; nor had he more than an undefined notion of the vast strides which science had taken in its combinations and discoveries. His mother, as we have already intimated, had a vision of a large congregation, animated and kindled up by the eloquence of her son from the pulpit: she did not know a higher elevation, else she would have striven to guide his mind to it.

The more that Morison read, and saw, and reflected, the less did he relish the eminence to which Mary desired to raise him: he had too much fire and passion, he already began to fear,

to enable him to run a calm course ; but he intimated no wish to thwart her, and heard of her intention to send him to college in the ensuing season with something akin to delight.

Dominie Milligan, who had duly rendered an account of Morison's progress in learning to Jeanie Rabson, without making any advances in the affections of the heiress of Howeboddom, concurred fully in Mary's views. "Morison," said he, "is to me a living riddle : he is at once all mischief and meditation ; he is at the head of all the merry mischief, as I may call it, which a schoolmaster must shut his eyes on : he is likewise at the top of every class wherever sense, and feeling, and talent are wanted. Ye will see him steering about in the bay, too, with all the boldness of a sailor—ye will see him mounted on some unbacked colt scaling the hills like a child of the desert—ye will find him hand and glove with some wild slip of a lad, just as if they were laying their heads together to rob orchards and sod up chimneys, and then find him in grave converse with *douce King Corrie*, or *John Mackeen*, or *Andrew Bell*, or some other of the natural lights of the parish. And besides ye see, he has safter inclinations, Jeanie : he is unco fond of laying his cheek close to that of *bonnie Mattie Anderson*,

when she is showing her the meaning of some puzzling word, and the lassie sits quiet with her een downcast."

"Dinna," said Jeanie Rabson, "lay yere cheek to mine Dominie—daft bodie, I am no bonnie Mattie Anderson, nor are ye Morison Roldan."

"Aweel," said the Dominie, sitting more perpendicular, "I concur in the motion of sending the young man to college. By the time the sickle is next among the corn, he will be put as far as my humble knowledge can put him, and then he maun go to the city of Edinburgh, and drink at the classic wells of that noble place; look out for some earl's son, who desires to learn his lesson through other men's capacities, and if he is judicious, and disna fa' in love with ane of his noble scholar's sisters, he may be ablins presented to a kirk, and the dreams of his mother realized."

"And how is he to be provided for at college, Dominie?" said Jeanie; "how mickle siller will it take, and aboon a' will it no be a risk?—He's young and he's 'handsome, with a wild ee, and wit at will; and then they say that the bonniest lasses in the wide world are to be seen in Edinburgh.—I doubt him, Dominie, I doubt him."

The Dominie looked at Jeanie for a little space, but she saw that his mind was not where his eye

was ; it had flown to Edinburgh, and there in a back room, in one of Auld Reekie's uncleanly lanes, called Panton-street, had imagined a half-starved student with his deal table, his sanded floor, his twopenny bap, and his bottle of three-halfpenny ale ; and intrenched him among such reading as few read save those who thirst for knowledge, and drink at all springs.

“ Aye, Jeanie,” said the Dominie, “ it will cost much money ; fifteen pounds sterling, doubtless, for the season ; but then the outlay may be lessened by sending by the carrier baked bread, and dressed linen, and new butter, and ewe-milk cheese : then there will be letters, and books, and pen and ink ; for there's no limit to the outlay in learning ; and he may get into a house, as I did, where there dwalt three fiddlers, that kept scriev-
ing awa at ‘ Clean pea strae,’ ‘ Nelly Weems,’ ‘ Bab at the Bowster,’ and other graceless airs, whilk accorded ill with the character of my studies ; for I winna conceal from you, that when I heard the fiddle skirling, and light feet bounding o'er the floor, I felt mair than disposed —ane of the broken remnant as I am—to cast Boston and Harvey, yea, and even Jeremy Taylor himself, aside, and loup, and shuffle, and

cut 'Owre the buckle' and the 'Highland-fling' with the merriest of them."

"Ye frighten me, John Milligan," said Jeanie. "Wow! but Edinburgh maun be a gaye and queer place."

"Hou! that's nought, Jeanie woman, for though the streets are filled wi' beauty by day, there is anither class whilk I call beauties of the night, that, like howlets and sic like birds of prey, come out of their hames and houses, and frae ten o'clock till twelve, and sometimes to the short hour beyond it, fill the streets, wi' heads full of feathers, and trail their syde tailed gowns after a wanton fashion—and O! only to look at their painted cheeks and curled locks, their bare white arms and insnaring eyes, is an awful thing."

"Hegh be't! John Milligan," said Jeanie; "it will be as much as youth can do to eschew those insnaringers: but I have little dread of our Morison, though I maun say that his reading cheek by cheek wi' bonnie Mattie Anderson, bodes nae forbearance that way. But we will watch him at Dalgarrock kirn to night, when the sound of sweet music, the charm of harmonious feet, the waving of love-locks and the glancing of bright een will be all around him, and he will not be able to contain

himself. No, Dominie, that I am against saft words atween young folk, or kind looks either ; but some folk have nae hold of their hand, and make a midnight tryste o' the matter and a brash of wooing."

The farm of Dalgarrock lay on the sea-coast. The last rick of corn had been secured under a coat of broom from the rains and snows of winter ; and a festival was announced in which supper was to be prepared for the old, music for the young, and drink for all. It was, in brief, the harvest kirn, and long before Morison arrived the mirth and license had commenced. He who brought home the last load of grain was accused of the crime of bringing in winter, and pelted with eggs so long as eggs were to be found. Cream in spoonfuls and milk in ladlefuls were liberally showered on all who had been employed in the labours of the farm ; and when this pastime ceased, the person who had reaped the last handful of grain was brought forward and decked with ribbons ; while a few ears of corn neatly arranged and braided, were carried as a nosegay under the name of the kirn. This symbol of plenty was borne on the present occasion by a young woman whose beauty rendered her no unfit representative of Ceres, in whose

honour antiquarians—who define all that no one else can comprehend—aver that the festival of the *kirn* was instituted.

For some time before Morison—an invited guest—reached Dalgarrock, he was made sensible that mirth and glee had taken up their abode in the farmer's onstead for one night at least. Lights streamed from window and from porch; from the barn the sound of minstrelsy and the bounding of innumerable feet arose, while door and loophole threw far along the valley and even upon the advancing tide such gushes of light as startled alike the birds in the bush and the smugglers on the sea. Then the sound would suddenly cease, while those who were nigh might hear the salute of lips, as lads reseated their partners, and the commendations bestowed on those who acquitted themselves best. All at once, the music would reawaken and the din of the dance recommence; while coming guests, yet at a distance, hastened their steps anxious to partake of the joy.

“Take time, lad, and take us wi' you,” said a sharp shrill voice to Morison, as, with a light foot and a lighter heart, he was making his way to Dalgarrock.

“Hout! and is this you, lad?” said Nickie

Neevison, as he halted and obeyed the summons. “I thought it was auld James Macrabin, the cooper, ye were gaun sae lamely: but just take yere time, it’s no ilka hour of the day that ye foregather wi’ me. Now Morison, my lad, ye’re bonnily drest, and yere looks are no amiss, and yere heart’s light, and ye have reason to believe that the night will gang merrily wi’ you. But take care: there’s some wild young slips of lads at this house the night, that winna endure to be banged baith in latin and lasses, and there may be draps of blude on that white waistcoat —and it is a braw ane, flowered I guess by yere mither’s ain hand—draps of blude, I say, before the hour o’ midnight.”

Morison laughed, and said, “But Nickie, if any lad chooses to quarrel with me about you, I shall say that ye were giving me good counsel, and that—”

“Ye’re a gowk!” exclaimed Nickie, “and ye ken ye are. But what will Will Lorburne, of Knockleshang, say, think ye, when he sees ye dancing wi’ winsome Mattie Anderson? His blude’s hot, and his hand’s ready. But here’s the place, and there they are all on the floor;—dinna say that I didna warn ye:” and she held up her forefinger as he entered the place.

“ Where have ye been till this hour ? ” inquired Davie Gellock ; “ for Jeanie Rabson, of Howeboddom, has been speering for you ; Dominie Milligan marvels what has detained the learned youth, even Morison ; and here have I been raxing my neck glowering for ye alang the road to the Elfin-glen ; and there’s Mattie Anderson herself, she’ll maybe no tell ye wha she has been langing for every time the door opened. There ! ye see she’s on the floor wi’ young Knockleshang. She sees ye now—she sees ye now ! I wadna gie Will Lorburne a single bodle for his chance of her. Morison, there’s sundry here who like neither you nor me, and young Knockleshang is one of them. If ye’ll just step up and take Mattie Anderson frae him, I’ll stand by you against a dozen.”

Morison smiled, and walked to the upper end of the place, where several of the graver guests were seated, and entered into discourse with them. He talked so sensibly, and with so much knowledge of crops and cattle, and seasons, that the goodman of the Foregirth said, “ I’ll make room for ye here, Morison : it’s rare to hear any of the youth of this age know the difference between winter and ware.”

The goodwife of the Foregirth interposed

with, "Ne'er fash your thumb, gudeman, but steer about the toddy: it's mair natural-like that the lad should be shaking his shanks amang yere ain daughters on the floor, than talking wi' you about cropping and draining, and laying a great louth of beasts on Duncow-craft."

The circulation of the punch, impeded by this conversation, was renewed; and Morison, obeying the hint, led out one of the daughters of the house of Foregirth, and requested to know what tune she desired.

The young woman, Nancie Irving by name, glanced on the querist an eye to which music and dancing gave an increase of lustre, though that was needless, and said she could dance to any tune. The fiddler, a blind old man, but whose sense of hearing was sharpened by the loss, cried, "I'll suit ye, lass: I hear ye, Nancie Irving—but to whom does that other voice belong? If it were na that they say Lord Roldan is owre the sea, I wad call it his. It is the voice of a Roldan, if ever I heard it in my life."

"Ye are nigh right, there," exclaimed young Knockleshang; "the country kens he's the son of that wild lord, though we a' ken that he was na acknowledged. But play up: he's the son of somebody, and that's enough."

“ If he’s his father’s son,” muttered the blind musician, “ your brag will be but short—there now—I kenned it. Where’s the case of my breadwinner, for here’s a bruilzie ! ” and he slipped his fiddle into the case, and began to descend from the sackhead on which he sat, in order to escape from the expected strife of fists and flails.

His alarm was needless. It is true that Morrison’s eye brightened and his face darkened ; that he measured the rustic bully as if he sought for a place to inflict a blow—nay, stepped half a step forward as if about to give it ; but, whatever was passing in his mind, he did no more. “ Play up,” he said ; “ will you keep us here all night without music, old man ? ”

John Aiken, for that was the name of the musician, muttered as he withdrew his instrument from the case and began to adjust the strings, “ My ear has deceived me for ance : he’s no of the Roldan blude.” The rest was lost in the sound which he drew from the strings, and which no mortal foot could resist, for the fiddle spoke as plain as with a tongue. He heard with joy the even beat of descending feet, and he exclaimed, “ My fiddle’s a grand peacemaker ! If there were strife atween twa bosom banes, it

would settle and soothe it. Better beating the floor to melody sic as mine, than clanking ilk ither's crowns. But there's a'ne out of time."

" It's the sumph of Knockleshang," cried Davie Gellock ; " he maun be beat himsel before he can beat time."

" Are ye the lad that can do it?" inquired the young portioner ; and during the remainder of the reel all was harmony.

" The spirit's gane frae the land," said an old bandsman, shaking his white head as he set down his empty glass ; " the spirit's gane frae the land. In my youthful days words, no half sae warm as these, would have produced sic a braw fight ! and there's nae lack of weapons for willing hands here ; a dozen of flails make twa dozen of gude fighting-sticks, a' the vale kens that, forbye pitchforks and rake-handles ; but of all things the strake of the bushel for me. But, Simon Glen, I'm saying the spirit I think's gane out of our drink too : this punch is cauld and fizzenless. But what's a' this now—what's a' this ? Preserve us ! here's a sight for sair een !" As he spoke the doors opened, and Lady Winifred Roldan, accompanied by a young lady, and followed by her two waiting maidens, entered the place, and took her seat on a covered bench,

prepared at the head of the barn for titled guests—for titled guests sometimes condescended to honour rustic merriment with their august presence.

In those days the aristocracy were reserved and haughty enough; but the link which connected them with the humbler classes was not snapped in twain, as it has been in these latter times. There was a bridge, narrow indeed and insecure, between the great common of rustic life and that paradisial table-land on which the titled and the wealthy sat or reposed; a bridge of dread, like that described in the old romance, over which none but the great-minded and the daring could pass. The belted earl and the wealthy baron admitted their rustic dependants to their halls on great festival-days; and when kirn suppers, and other set times of social merriment occurred in the farmer's hall, state was laid aside, and they looked on and smiled; their ladies gazed over their fans or through their veils, and perhaps their daughters condescended to walk down a country-dance with some handsome or intrepid ploughman, who had the audacity to ask that honour. It was in conformity to this ancient custom that Lady Winifred made her appearance to-night, at the harvest

kirn of one of the dependants of her house ; and as soon as the rustling of her silks had ceased, and her attendants had taken seats, the mirth of the evening recommenced, as lively but more decorous than before.

The young lady who accompanied Lady Roldan was of great beauty, and a stranger : her dress was simple, but rich : a white satin fillet, studded with diamonds, restrained her hair ; but nothing could restrain the speaking brightness of her looks as the tune struck up, and the fiddler lent his spirit to his art, and caused his strings to utter both words and music. Morison could not look on this vision without emotion ; but he did not allow her looks to fetter his feet or take away the graceful ease of all his steps ; and so well did he acquit himself that Lady Winifred could not avoid observing that the young peasant danced with all the grace and neatness of one of gentle blood. It is probable that he overheard her words ; or what is more likely, he read in the eyes of the fair stranger that she would not refuse her hand if modestly asked : he accordingly stepped up, and, bowing, begged that honour : she looked at him for a moment, and rising with a smile, took her place ; and as she took it, the musician, slanting his cheek to the instrument, played an air which

he declared was fit only for feet inspired with poetry and music.

The feet that beat time to the tune were quite worthy of the divinity which the musician claimed for it: his face flushed up with delight; his sightless eyes seemed to see; and he exclaimed, “Well done feet! by God, ye surpass fiddle-strings!” He changed the tune again and again; he drew a bolder and a stronger bow; but still to all his miracles of music, as he called his favourite reel tunes, did Morison and the young lady keep time, till fairly worn out and wearied with rapture, the fiddler paused, wiped the moisture from his brow, and said, “Aweel, this cowes a’! deil hae me, fiddle and a’ thegither, if ever I heard the yauchie on’t. But where’s the bairns that did it, and what’s their names? I wish they would come within reach of my hand, that I might touch and tell them what’s in them.” The young lady glanced at Morison: he interpreted her meaning, and led her up to the seat of the blind old man. “Aye, aye! I hear ye,” he said, “but dinna speak till I speak.” He then laid his pale thin hand on the young lady’s head, and passed it over her brow and temples, nose and chin, with the slow motion of an instrument tracing a profile. “That will do,” he said; “now for the other.” He

passed his hand over Morison's face, pausing on every lineament; nor did he leave their dresses untouched. "I canna make ye out," he said. "I'm puzzled, that never was puzzled before; ye are both Roldans, that I wot weel; but how come the diamonds and satins of the lass, and the hamespun sea-green suit o' the lad? Oh! this is a sad world, when those that hung, maybe, at the same breast are so different in their fortunes! Awa' wi' ye now like dainty anes, and dance, and laugh, and rejoice; for what says the wise rhymer;

The present moment is our ain;
The next we never saw."

As Morison and his partner stood awaiting the music for a second reel, the former said, "The skill of that old man in thairms is greater than in faces, I fear: the harmony of a pair of handsome feet has confused his mind, and he finds resemblances that never existed."

"You seem alarmed lest his guess should prove true," replied the young lady, with a voice low and sweet; "I wish you would ask the prophet and fiddler to interpret to me the looks of Lady Winifred—she cannot take her eyes off you—She claims you for a Roldan."

"I can interpret them," said Morison, in a whisper: "The lady of Roldan sees in your un-

worthy partner a creature whose birth is a by-word, and whose name is not to be sounded in the ears of the stainless and the far descended." The young lady gazed on him as he spoke, and seemed about to answer him; he, however, proceeded— "Yes," he said, and his eye kindled with his words, "I am an outcast and a vagabond: he to whom I owe the looks which even the hand of the blind discovered, refused to know me as a son—but all the better: I shall be something yet, lady, or I shall soon be nothing. Your very looks appear to reprove my presumption for dancing with you: but I only bowed; I presumed not to touch your hand."

Her hand was in his in a moment—"There," she said, "feel now that there is at least one in the world whose soul is superior to those prejudices to which you allude. Hear me, Morison!"—

Lady Winifred was on her feet in a moment; the quick rustling of her silks showed the agitation of her mind; and just as the musician gave the preluding flourish to the commencement of the reel, she seized Morison's partner by the hand, saying: "Come, Rose Roldan, we are here too long; I ought to have known to what we would be exposed by mingling with such company." As she hurried her off she was heard

to say, probably in reply to some remark made by Lady Rose—"Can a rotten branch of a stately tree put forth leaves and blossom, and bear fruit? Should a weed planted in a garden for a flower not be pulled up and cast away? Am I to look at a will-o'-wisp with the reverence due to a fixed star?"

Morison stood when thus robbed of his partner as if uncertain what to do; his looks denoted so well what he felt, that honest Davie was heard to mutter, "O that Knockles wad but say a word to him now!" What he hoped, happened: the young laird had seen with no pleasant feelings the impression which Morison made on all by his courtesy of manners and his graceful carriage in the dance; he heard too the whispers go round how like the Lady Rose was to Morison; he had detected Mattie Anderson in the very act of thieving a look at him, and imagined that he read a preference to his rival, in her eyes. This so incensed him, that he resolved to insult the other in the face of the company.

It chanced that a wandering woman was staying for the night at Dalgarrock; her bed was in the barn; and she came to seek her place among the sacks and the straw. Lorburne seized her as she crossed the floor, and before

any one could imagine his meaning, thrust her before Morison, saying, “there is a partner more suitable than the last.”

The poor woman gave a look up in Morison’s face, and wished to be gone ; but he stayed her, saying, “He’s right.”—The music struck up, and well, and to the surprise of all, did she acquit herself in the dance ; though encumbered—why should we conceal it ?—“with rags and bags and clouted shoon,” she danced with both ease and grace ; when conducted to a seat, she said, “I have danced on figured floors ; but there are ups and downs in this world, and a full share has fallen to me—but bless thee, young man—bless thee, whoever thou art ! for not despising a gift which, I need not tell thee, was bestowed in scorn.”

Morison then walked up to the young laird, and said, “You have uttered words about me to-night, and given me a partner, neither of which were required at your hands ; step to the door, and show me how you can justify it.”

To the door, nothing at all loth, stepped the laird : Davie in a moment bolted it behind them, and setting his back to the bar exclaimed, “A minute will do ; dinna spare him, Morison ; gie him his kale through the reek—that’s right—

thrash him weel, thrash him weel ! for bonnie Mattie Anderson's looking."

It was not without some force, and a blow or two, that Davie was removed, and the door thrown open ; the upshot justified his confidence in his friend ; young Knockles, as Davie called him, was lying on the ground, and Morison waiting his rising—but this rising was to be no act of his own : two or three blows on the face, which had drawn blood, and one or two blows elsewhere which had deprived him of breath, were hints not to rise in a hurry, and when, by the interposition of friends, he was placed on his feet, he rubbed his bloody face, looked ruefully at his hands, and seemed about as ready to run away as to renew the battle.

" This cock winna fight, he can only craw," said Davie, " and now, I think the very midden hens may beat him at that."

Morison, who exhibited no marks of the other's prowess, returned to the dancing-floor, and his joyous looks, pleasant words, and active feet, showed that the memory of past events had probably passed away.

The mirth, which these matters had partially interrupted, grew louder and more sustained ; the reek rose thicker and richer from the punch-bowl ;

stories of old loves and old battles, and anecdotes, witty or humorous, were all at least begun, if neither fairly listened to nor brought to an end. The laird of the Netherton spoke on the natural rotation of the crops; the goodman of Barscroy told the history of a ewe of an over sea breed, by which he hoped to improve the mutton and refine the wool of the district: the laird of Moorfen produced a blade of a new-discovered grass which would grow on a pouring sand as well as on loam two ells deep—and better on a quaking bog than in a trenched garden; he required but seven years, and his own free will and Scotland would be converted into one great grazing park of which the English would eat the flesh and the Scotch pouch the siller. A fourth had invented a machine, by which, “I shall,” said he, “enable man to fulfil the intentions of Providence. There’s Glengarnock burn; God sir, let me but put my machine into it, and I’ll turn it into a navigable river fit for sloops and seventy-fours.”

“ But Willie Wilson of Gusedubs talked loudest and longest. He claimed the merit of being the inventor and maker of a singular boat. “ I was sitting,” he said, “ ae night by the chimley lug, and I thought on the sea as I heard it roaring, and how that born ne’erdeweel Paul Jones maist

slokened a' the fires of London by stopping Newcastle coals. So, ye see, I said to myself I'll invent something—what shall I invent? Weel, ye see, I said invent!—I shall just invent a boat that will dive down in the deep sea, and come up in Bologne harbour under the keels of the French navy and blaw them to the moon, and I invented it. Weel, ye see, I hoyed awa to London; and, sir, wad ye believe't? the Admirality took half a year to consider on't—ae secretary set it on ae end, the other secretary set it on the tother; but they could make nothing o't. At length, sir, in came ane of the admirals, and he declared that a my wheels, and pulcys, and masts, and rapes were put in hab nab at random—he was nae far wrang there—sae to make a lang tale short, I pouched twa guineas a week o' their siller, passed as a genius for a full half-year—longer than the usual lot of man—and here am I wi' my bit boat waiting for a change of ministry, when I shall be a genius again and pouch the gowd ance mair."

During this conversation the floor was filled and emptied several times with country-dances and reels. Morison, with Mattie Anderson for his partner, extracted melody, as the musician averred, from the very dumb deals of the threshing-floor; nor did he trust to his active feet and graceful

form alone to render himself acceptable, he talked of earlier days when seated beside her in the school, he felt infected by her breath on his cheek—how he loved to linger with her on his way home—pluck flowers for her among the cliffs, and paidle with her in the mill-burn, forming new currents among the silver sand with their feet. Nor did he fail to allude to the high trees which he had climbed to pluck wild cherries for her; nay, how he had braved spring-guns and man-traps, and living watchers to bring her plums and apples which she loved. To his surprise these words—and they were warmly uttered—fell on cold ears; she turned suddenly round on him and said, “It’s a’ very guude to talk of lessons at school, and of the flowers and cherries ye pulled for me, but ye maun be sensible that ye are aiming to match wi’ ane that’s mair nor yere marrow. I saw wi’ my ain een how lady Winifred looked on ye this very night, sae there is nae hope there, and will your mither’s wee pickle siller plenish a house fit for me, think ye? Na, na: then there’s the lack of parentage—I have had my een opened this night.”

The eyes of Morison were opened somewhat also: he was stung, and that sharply; not that he had ever felt so deeply in the matter as Miss

Anderson had done. "Ye speak plainly, Mattie," he said: "yet humility suits us all best. But had I kenned ance what I ken now, ye should have had reason to remember the bower-tree bank of Barnhourie-hill."

A loud blast of the harvest horn summoned the dancers to supper, and as they walked from the barn to the house, Davie said, "An I were you, Morison, I wadna mind Mattie Anderson's scorn mair than a drap of rain when the wind's i' the wast: ye may catch her when ye like for a' her tossings o' the head to-night; but then be cautious, lad, what ye catch. Did I no see her skaling dung on the craft wi' her best spencer on, and three feathers, ane white, ane blue, and ane red in her riggin. I'm doubtfu', Morison, I'm doubtfu', that she has mair sail than ballast: like Willie Wastle's sloop, no sae sicker when the breeze is high as she should be—gaye and like to whamle—ye understand me."

CHAPTER VII.

Critiques I read on other men,

And hypers upon them agen;

From whose remarks I give opinion

On twenty books, but ne'er look in one

PRIOR.

MORISON returned to the Elfin-glen, and lay down, but it was neither to dream of the scorn of Mattie Anderson, the insolence of the young laird, nor of the strains of the musician. A vision of Rose Roldan was presented to his fancy in sleep. Her look was tranquil and lovely—she placed her hand in his, with the frankness of a sister—and they walked and talked in the Elfin-glen:—on all things they looked with the same eyes; they felt with the same hearts; they heard with the same ears, and one soul seemed to inform them both: nay, when they paced along the side of the brook, he imagined a voice said, “Bless them both, they are as like one another as twin cherries.”

When he awoke the vision and the reality were

in full possession of his fancy ; he thought all the events of the night over again ; considered her words—recalled her looks and felt anew the frank surrender of her hand ;—a white one, and bright with jewels. An affection of a pure and lofty nature filled his mind. Who she was he had inquired in vain ; even Nickie Neevison acknowledged that the lady-like lassie was an utter stranger to her—quite a new face ; but the family stamp was on her, and nae doubt she was a bit private manufacture of Lord Roldan's—he was just a ringing deevil amang the lasses—yet she wad do him the justice to say, he had never fashed her, though mony a civil thing he had said.

But with all this sweet, bitter was mingled. Morison reflected on his humble and half forlorn condition ; on the prejudice which his birth occasioned, respecting which he was doomed to receive more lessons than suited his pride or his temper ; he also surveyed the steep, up which his mother wished he should ascend to distinction, and was neither much pleased with the way, nor edified with the prospect. To become eminent as a divine, great learning was required, for he rightly deemed it presumptuous to attempt to preach the gospel without an intimate acquaintance with the

ancient languages, and also with the history, the manners, and customs of the old nations, through which the scriptures required to be read. When all this was accomplished, a patron was to be sought, and where was such to be found for one deprived of a father's protection, and with the prejudice of society strong against his hopes? It is true that Jeanie Rabson cried ever, “ Morison dinna despair ; but trust in God, and ye will be a light, sic as Scotland has na had since the days of the godly Rutherford.”

Now Morison trusted greatly in God ; indeed, he had no other trust, save in his own quickness of parts and firmness of nature ; but as he did not well know how fortune might chop and change, he resolved to embellish his mind with all such knowledge as might be useful ; and as he found no difficulty in mastering whatever he turned his thoughts to, our readers must not be surprised to hear that he not only filled his mind with such wisdom as books and conversation supply, but became expert in many manly exercises. In these, his activity and fine combination of form, his quick eye and vigorous arm, soon enabled him to excel ; he acquired great skill in the use of the sword, narrow as well as broad ; he could bring the curlew from the cloud with his rifle ; hit a bird

at twenty paces with a pistol-ball, and the wildest horse in the district he could back and rule at full gallop without either bridle or saddle. On the morning which followed the kirk at Dalgarrock, he went with Davie Gellock to the sea-cliffs to practise with ball, and look on the tide coming into the bay—at all times a beautiful sight: before he returned the sun was wellnigh the setting, and visitors, of whom we must render some account, had been at the Elfin-glen.

On and about this period man had found out many inventions. In one part of the world the sway of monarchical government was so severely felt, that the people broke the sceptre, and restored men with white skins to their original freedom, but retained those with dark skins in bondage merely to show the world, by contrast, the full value of liberty. In another part of the earth, religion was declared to be priestcraft; law a chain forged for man by the aristocracy; marriage a ridiculous obligation, insulting to true love and the God of heaven himself, a being of whose existence philosophical minds doubted, but which might be settled by ballot; while in the little isle where the scene of this domestic story is laid, a series of inventions in law, mechanics, and literature, had received the sanction of all with

classic lore in their heads, gold in their pockets, and good coats on their backs.

Of these latter we mean to speak. The new theory in law laid it down as a maxim, that the wild birds of the air, the wild beasts of the field, and the untamed fish of the sea and river, together with the waste fields and commons of the land, did not belong to all men, as had hitherto been believed, but were, whatever scripture might say to the contrary, expressly created for the use and pleasure of the titled and the rich ; and that whoever used the same, contrary to act of parliament, should be imprisoned or banished.

The new power in mechanics was of a singular nature. The lever, the wedge, and the screw were the invention of the poor, who desired to toil, and who—doomed to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow—made no tools but such as were in unison with

"That sad sentence of an ancient date."

But in all this the rich were too much at the mercy of the poor ; so those refractory machines composed of muscle, and bone, and blood, were cast aside, and supplanted by instruments of iron, and brass, and wood, which—for the boon of a little oil and, at first, a little outlay—refused to work for the poor and the needy, and toiled only for those

who ate the fish of the stream, the fowls of the air, and the wild beasts of the field, according to law. This benevolent invention was superior to that of gunpowder ; for while the discovery of the monk helped to clear the earth of half a million annually of those grumbling scoundrels who infested its surface, the invention of the mechanic turned an equal number out of employment, and gave them full liberty to range the public street and the king's highway, and enjoy all the freedom which man in his natural state was capable of—except the privilege of eating and drinking, and enjoying the earth and the fulness thereof.

The third invention was of a more subtle nature, and merits a fuller description. In the former, the quick spirit of England had a share ; but this latter was the legitimate babe of old Scotland alone ;—the fruit of mickle care and study, and, like a moth, was begot between sheets of sheepskin and pasteboard by old father antic the law ; the gospel, indeed, had some share in the conception ; but lest the imputation should impeach Calvinistic gravity, it was imputed to a laxer Lutheran, who owned the impeachment, since it did him no dishonour in a church where God was worshipped by means of machinery ! Learning—which means ignorance of all that is

living, and knowledge of all that is dead—was beginning to lose its influence on mankind. To restore a dethroned comma—drowse over all such reading as was never read ; and spell dead languages, were the wise acquirements that had long usurped the seat of genius ; they were now falling to leeward. This was perceived and felt by Braunks and Blynders, two of the professors of the new mysteries—men who undertook to set the world right, and said that all under the sun was wrong : commerce was wrong ; agriculture was wrong ; art was wrong ; science was wrong ; history was wrong ; poetry was wrong ; nature was wrong.

“ Behold,” said Blynders, “ the coming of a new era : let us go forth and read a lesson to the people of the land ; let us preach up that all is darkness, and that we are the light ; that man is but groping his way in tilling the ground, shearing sheep, planting trees, manufacturing linen, and in all rural improvements and domestic comforts.” “ And let us,” said Braunks, “ raise a new judgment-seat, and become the self-elected judges over the wide realms of literature ; let us always praise the dead—the illustrious dead—and see nothing but the defects of the living ; let us feel more disgust with one error, than de-

light with ten thousand beauties ; and if this be done boldly, mankind will believe in us, and we shall become great in the earth, and our judgments shall put nature down, and elevate learning —for what says Pangloss, the great apostle of the art we profess ? ‘ Legs were made for stockings ; therefore we wear stockings.’ ”

Something of the dread which a brood of chickens feel when the shadow of the kite’s wings suddenly comes upon them, seized the people of Glengarnock, when they heard that those two mysterious and terrible personages had made an inroad on their valley. It flew like moorburn over the land, and all eyes looked to those northern lights as men look to the sky when a comet brightens the firmament.

“ They are fearful men,” said Nickie Neevison, who had either seen them, or imagined it. “ They are sae wise that nought pleases them. They find fault wi’ the house, because it stands on a knowe ; wi’ the orchard, because it grows in a valley ; the lake they say is abominable, because there are pike in it and no salmon ; and the river is worse, because it has salmon and no pike. They find fault with the thrush, for it only sings ; with the blackbird, because it whistles—in short, they hold, that as Na-

ture is wrong, it is the business of men to set it right."

"Preserve us all!" said Jeanie Rabson, to whom these words were spoken—"they maun be wise men, indeed: and I'm thinking here they come. The tane is lang, black aviced, a tinker-like slough of a fallow; and the tither is wee ferret-eed and fiery—a gowk and titlin sort of pair. Wha would think that the best gifts of God were hidden in sic unseemly sanctuaries?—But gowd keeps weel in a calfskin purse."

"Here," said the Gowk, halting and looking on Howebooddom, "we have traced sloth and ignorance to their den. The house is calculated to dispose its inmates to rest, not to stimulate them to exertion; the very smoke comes lazily from the lum-head. Here resides one of those sons of sloth who refuses to commit his barley to the soil till the ground communicates heat to him when he sits down upon it."

"And here," said the Titlin, "all is on a small and contracted scale: no extensive system is laid down, no scientific principles of cultivation understood. Men slumber on; and women sleep, rub their eyes without wakening, and call themselves happy."

"Ye astonish me," said the laird of Drum-

drousie, who accompanied them. " If a happy household is in the land, it is that of the portioner of Howeboddom, and his sister: but here is Jeanie herself. Ye are all wrong here, Jeanie; ye have been saving money, and sawing corn, and shearing sheep, contrary to all true principles; your gain is not true gain. I am sorry to say so; but Mr. Braunks and Mr. Blynders, here, are of my opinion."

" Then Mr. Braunks is but a gowk, and Mr. Blynders is nae better," said Nickie Neevison. " It's easier to tell them than to send them word."

" We are happy," said Jeanie, " and have nae wish to be better. We have won siller, and we strive to keep it. We open our doors to the poor and the needy, and they eat and drink, and go on their way; and we sow our corn and reap it, and rear our sheep and shear them, and we often praise God that he winna permit the earth to be forced into fruit, save in the season, else man would be enslaved like an ox in a mill, and have nae time to wipe his brow and sing His praise."

" Such is the language we are ever doomed to hear," said Braunks.

" It is the cry of man, woman, and child,"

said Blynders. “ But science will force its way ; and the scales will fall from the eyes of even the benighted people of Howe boddom.” Having uttered this testimony, they walked on.

“ And what feudal barbarian dwells here ? ” inquired Braunks, pointing to Roldan Castle.

“ He seems a savage of Scotland’s darker day,” said Blynders. “ What is the name of his den ? ”

“ He is one,” said the laird, “ whom I never speak loud about. That is the castle of Lord Roldan—the hawk’s not at home.”

“ At home or abroad,” said Braunks, “ I would tell him, if I met him, that he who ought to set an example to the country is a drawback on its prosperity.”

“ Ye would have to snap a pistol with him, it is like then,” said the laird : “ he’s as proud as Satan and as hot as hell. I did but contradict him once at a county meeting, he challenged me in a moment. I threw off my coat, and offered to fight him where he stood, without the trouble of measuring ground and burning powder. He burst into a fit of laughter, and said to the Knight of Closeburn, ‘ Kirkpatrick, this Nithsdale kite of thine is but a goose ! ’ ”

“ He is but a hot-headed fool, then,” said

Blynders ; “ and we shall say nothing to make him uneasy, or cause him to wink and hold out his iron. But how can we shut our eyes to what is visible all around ? Fields pastured which should be tilled, fields tilled which should be pastured ; trees growing, where no trees should be allowed to grow—all is haggard and unpruned. Where is the rolled walk of pure gravel ; the hedge-row elms, all stately, straight, and planted by line and measure ; where is the irregularity made regular ? What beautiful absurdity of nature has he clapt on the back, and brought within the limit of art ! All is random-work : there is no classic taste : he understands not the capability of the ground.”

“ Wonderful ! ” exclaimed the laird ; “ I aye thought so. Capability ! —a fine word.”

“ Here again ! ” exclaimed Braunks, pausing at the entrance of the Elfin-glen ; “ here we have a striking example of the folly and ignorance of man. Why has the great first cause poured this brook down this vale ? —Who shall solve me that ? —No one—but yet it is plain and palpable. Was it to water the foxgloves, and bowers of honeysuckle, and holly on its banks ? No. Was it to moisten the valley and promote the growth of corn ? No. Was it that maidens might

bleach their linen, and bards find in its sound a melody worthy of their longest ballads? No. But the great first cause sent it here to drive the machinery of a hundred mills, by which the holder of the soil should be enriched, and money added to the country's revenue to enable it to carry on the march of mind."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed the laird. "Drive a hundred mills!—I never thought of so many as that; but I proposed fifty, nevertheless."

"It is plain," said Blynders, "that all about this land is in a state of black nature: here is a stream with many judicious falls and a handsome volume of water, which is, nevertheless, allowed by the lordly Hottentots of the soil to run to waste, forming five hundred nooks and crooks amid arable land. Why is its channel not straightened? Why is it not banked in with stone?—That would enrich the landscape, and add to the stream the beauty of grain on the banks," and he held out his staff to indicate the line in which he wished the brook to run.

"An' I were you," said Nickie Neevison, who was on her way to the Elfin-cottage.—"An' I were you, I would admit the burn into your counsels; it's not only an elf of a stream, but it's a perfect deevil whiles, and will not scruple to as-

sert its natural dignity. Confine it between banks ! Are ye daft ? ye might as well try to confine a clap of thunder : bide a wee till a bairn is born to the house of Roldan, and I'll tell ye where yere grand embankments will be !”

Here Braunks muttered something, dived into his pocket, then into his pocket-book, fished out a memorandum, perused it carefully for a little space, and said : “ A stream ruled in its overflow by the birth of man or woman is something new : had ye said that the star of the house of Roldan shot from its place; or that the spirit which has the family in its keeping appeared, I might have believed it.”

“ Ye can swallow a gaye deal for a’ that,” said Nickie. “ As for sic a thing as a house star, I never heard of it ; there is, indeed, a rumour and whisper that a ladye-spirit of matchless beauty watches owre the house of Roldan—not having seen it I canna say ; but with regard to the overflow of the Elfin-burn, that I have witnessed myself : I mind na when Lord Roldan was born, but as the lad Morison came to the warld there was a spate !—and mair nor that, ask the woman that dwalls in the cottage up bye there—she has cause to remember it. But what are ye doing wi’ yere kylevine and bit

paper?—if ye are clinking down ilka word I say, I'll steek my gab for ever—Nickie Neevison's owre auld a cat to draw that strae afore. There was Jane Dibbin o' the lang vennel an outspoken person like myself, somebody penned down what she said about Peg Dalzell and the laird of Girharrow, and it cost her baith gowd and white monie, as the sang says. Yet what need I care? write away—I speak nae scandal."

"It is because ye are speaking the truth," said Braunks, "that I am paying this attention to it: so the Elfin-burn, as you call it, has overflowed its banks once in your remembrance—has it not happened twice think ye?"

"Hout, gae awa now, ye are no the quiet simple person ye wad have me believe: sae ye think there has been twa born instead of ane? d'ye ken I have jaloused sae myself."

"Have you, indeed?" replied the other.

"Aye, indeed, have I," said Nickie, "and if you like to listen, I shall show you the grounds of my belief. It was just a year, ye see, after the birth of the boy Morison, that Lord Thomas came hame; naebody kenned weel how, yet a' fowk said he came by sea, and that he had a lady wi' him—a lady that was or should have been his wife. Now she was wondrous

bonnie, folk said, but then she was of a heretical house, and that the old lady couldna stomach. The first day she did nought but rejoice owre her son, and the second, she did nought but mourn owre her daughter, and on the third, because she wadna bow the knee to Baal and worship their saints, whilk we ca' idols, there was a grand gae to: and whether it was the proud Lady Winifred that put her out of the house, or whether it was the equally proud Lady Liliias—for so they ca'd her—that wadna bide in't, I canna weel say, but out she went; and a wild night it was, wi' fire i' the air and whirlwinds and she took to the sea; and atween and the French shore they say, that a lass-bairn came to the world. Now ye see, there's nought to hinder all this to be true; and there's nought to prevent it from being a bleezing falsehood; save that when fifteen years were come and gane, here comes frae the other side of the sea, this quean—and a bonnie ane she is—Rose Roldan. Some say she is the bairn I spoke of; some say, she is the daughter of Lord Roldan by a foreign lady of his own way both in religion and morals; and others say she is an orphan;—weel I wot she's a Roldan ony how;—for first and foremost, she has their stamp o' counte-

nance; and secondly, I heard her wi' my ain lugs as gude as own Morison Roldan for a brither, notwithstanding the stamp wi' the foot and the black looks of the old lady."

All this, and more, was carefully noted down, for these men added the profits of that mysterious art of confounding right and wrong, called law, to the income of criticism. One whispered to the other, "This supplies the very link which our chain of evidence required for establishing the conjugal claims of Lady Liliás."

They had now reached the hedge of holly which screened the abode of Mary Morison, when the voice of one singing was heard—the voice came from the cottage. "Whisht hinnies, whisht!" said Nickie, "that's her voice, and she's singing the sang made about her own misfortunes—Lord how lucky! She never sang it to any body but ane, and that was to Jeanie Rabson, and Jean's cheeks were wat for a week;—O whisht—will ye no whisht! The names ye maun ken are disguised, but the tale is a true ane."

"This is lucky," said Braunks to Blynders, "we shall have the words of the vulgar muse from her own lips: we shall drink at the fount of rustic inspiration, and see the sentiment of the thing raw and rough, before learning

polishes it into elegance, and bestows true beauty." The voice of Mary Morison now rose clear and distinct, nor was she conscious of singing so loud, or before such an audience.

THE BROKEN HEART OF ANNIE.

I.

" Up yon green glen in yon wee bower
 Dwelt fair and lovely Annie,
 Ere she saw seventeen simmers' suns
 She waxed wondrous bonnie.
 Young Lord Dalzell at her bower door,
 Had privily been calling,
 When she grew faint and sick of heart,
 And moanings filled her dwalling."

"Upon my honour," said Blynders, during the pause which ensued at the end of the verse, "This rustic damsels seems to have a pretty notion of her own perfections: how naively she records her charms, and how dexterously works in the visits of her lover."

"It's a' as true as that the sun's shining," said Nickie; "I ken her weel: she was not only the bonniest lass o' the country side then, but she's the bonniest yet; there's no the like of Mary in seventeen parishes; and weel I wot her lover made his visits privily: not a soul jaloused it till his auld mither fand it out—as she finds out a' things, through the pope and the deevil—

There was a bonnie hurley burley ! for ye see,
 Lord Roldan had vowed marriage—some said,
 had written it—and would keep his word ; and
 his mother vowed she wad hae him released frae
 sic obligations—she belongs to a handy kirk for
 that—but she's singing again.” The song was
 renewed, but in a lower voice.

II.

I found her like the lilye-flower
 When rain has drench'd its blossom ;
 Wet were her cheeks, and a sweet babe
 Hung smiling at her bosom.
 Such shudderings shook her frame as seemed
 Both heart and soul to sever ;
 In no one's face she looked—her bloom
 Was fading, and for ever.

“Aha!” said Blynders ; “so that is the upshot, is it? Her grief has fallen into her arms : there is a natural inclination to wickedness in all untutored minds ; here's this pretty peasant giving her sins an airing in song. It will ease her heart, though the rhyme is of the rudest.”

“Ye word it weel,” said Nickie Neevison ; “but d'ye think that sin is the offspring of ignorance —will ye say what was the offspring of knowledge—did ye ever read the bible, and see what Eve gat by her wisdom? I have ye thiere, ye serpent! She's singing again.”

III.

Thou hast thy father's smile, my babe,
 Maid's eyes to dim wi' grieving ;
 His wiling glance, which woman's heart
 Could fill with fond believing.
 A voice which made his falsest vows
 Seem breathings all of heaven ;
 And get from hearts which he had broke
 His perjuries forgiven.

“ I am beginning,” said Braunks, “ to weary of this dolorous ditty ; the rustic muse sends her flour to market with the bran unboulted : Scotland is inundated with easy rhymes ; the voice of the frogs of Egypt was typical of them, they are so harsh, rugged, and unmelodious.”

“ We must sentence them, from the critical judgment-seat, to silence and oblivion,” said Blynders ; “ such untutored strains have prevailed too long in the land.”

“ Ye maun begin, then, wi' the thrush on the budding bough, and the lark in the simmer cloud,” said Nickie ; “ they are untutored songsters, nor are their songs mair natural than those which come from the lips of shepherds watching their lambs, mothers watching owre their slumbering bairns, aye ! or that of the ploughman lad wi' red mools on his shoon. I sometimes take to singing, just to please mysel— it's wonderfu', as the laird here says, it's really

wonderfu' what consolation ane finds in a sang—
a natural ane I mean ; but Mary's at it again—
whisht!"

IV.

My false love came to me yestreen,
With words all steeped in honey,
He kissed his babe, and said sweet wean,
Be as thy mother bonnie.
Then out he pulled a purse o' gold,
Wi' rings and rubies mony ;
I looked at him, but couldna speak,
Ye've broke the heart of Annie.

V.

'Tis not thy gold and jewels bright,
Nor words like dropping honey,
Thy silken scarfes, and mantles fine,
And caps all laced and bonnie,
Can bring me back the peace I've tint,
Or heal the heart of Annie—
Go speak to thy God, of broken vows ;
For thou hast broken mony.

" So," said Blynders, " this is one of the strains which have made Scotland famous for lyric talent. It is simple indeed, and the poverty of its sentiment is only equalled by its barrenness in rhyme. As it is a vulgar record of rustic feelings, it may please coarse minds. When the croak of the crow is mistaken for the amorous trill of the lark, then will this song take its place among the bright strains of minds purified by learning."

" Now, ye see," said Nickie, " I just admire it for what ye dislike it for : it's no like a polished

song, and its a' the better. The thistle is na like the rose, yet it's a martial flower and lovely in its kind when laden wi' bees, and the bonnie blooming bonnets are crowning it with beauty. If ye canna talk mair sensibly anent sang to ithers than ye have done to me, ye will as soon move millstones wi' whistling jig tunes, as harm the natural songs of Scotland wi' your criticisms. If ye will speak, speak to England, where they have no music, and consequently no true sangs, and will swallow ony incredible fiction of sound."

The door of the cottage was open, and they all walked in. Mary was sitting flowering a mantle: the flowers were those of her native glen, and wrought in with a delicacy and elegance which made Nickie Neevison declare it would make a covering fit for the shoulders of Summer herself.

"It is curious," said Blynders—"only curious from being wrought by untutored hands and imitated from weeds common to the soil. It is of a piece with the song we have just heard, simple, and such as may be found without much expense of travel."

Mary looked in the speaker's face, and said, "Who are you, sir, that you presume to press in

upon the privacy of an unprotected person, and insult her by playing the listener to her words, when she thought herself alone?"

"Upon my soul!" said Blynders to his companion, "that abruptness was fine. It would have made an impression even on the fifteen—men not easily moved—I must try it on my return:—'Who are you, that you thus presume to press on the privacy—?' I can bring it in with effect, I have no doubt of it."

The light in Mary's eyes intimated the burning of her heart. Blynders was quite accustomed to such emotions. "Be composed, madam," he said. "We—that is Mr. Braunks and myself—are, what may be called, sole monarchs over the wide realms of science and taste. When we say bad, all the wise and learned men of the land cry bad; and when we cry good, all the wise and learned men of the isle shout good, likewise. As we are, therefore, absolute in all such matters, you must not be peevish with us because we listened and recorded your song."

"Recorded it!" said Mary. "Am I to understand that you have not only intruded upon me, but written down the sorrowful words of a bleeding heart, that they may be chanted

in the public streets, hawked about the country side, and sung up Nith and down Dee?"

"I have written them down," said Blynders, with a sneer, "not that they may be sung along the pastoral streams of Scotland, but for the purpose of printing them with the polished strains of classic learning, to show to the world the difference between the compact and elegant lyrics of old and the loose, flimsy ditties of the rustics of our latter days. They will be of use as a matter of contrast."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed the laird of Drumdrousie. "Who ever heard before, of aught useful coming from rustic verse? You ought to be thankful, woman, that men of such learning and taste condescend to quote your sang, though only by way of contrast."

"I am thankful for nothing of the sort, sir," said Mary, "nor is it becoming in gentlemen to trample on the feelings of one so poor and so crushed as I am. I have erred and I have suffered; but my errors were harmful chiefly to myself and to my poor boy, who has a heart not formed, alas! for the bosom of a slave, nor calculated to endure the contumelies which the stain of his birth will, I see, heap upon him. O, sir! dinna make use of that sang, and I will never

sing it mair: indeed I didna ken I was singing it even now; but I sing it whiles unconsciously, for it eases my heart;—may your heart never be so heavy that a melancholy song can lighten it!"

"Wonderful!" exclaimed the laird, "Lighten ane's heart with a melancholy song! I shall try that, for I am sometimes sad. I was sad this simmer, when dae nettles sprang up in the Kirncannie moss instead of carrots; and I was sad too, when we dug for coals in the Flowanflossh, and got nought but peats."

Blynders and Braunks rose to be gone. "You ought to be a happy woman," said the former; "for you have furnished a sample of song, which will presently be instanced from our judgment-seat, as a specimen of that simple and slovenly style, which, coming from a vulgar source, is not only injuring the legitimate cause of classic verse, but is absolutely choking the rising crop of rhymers."

"Aye, you ought to rejoice, Mary—what is your other name—Morison?" said Braunks, "for had we not come to this vale, to lay down our great philosophical principles in economic agriculture, and in classic verse, the song which you have composed would have gone forth over the

land, like moorburn, misleading all the seventeen hundred poets, which this age, prolific in rhyme, has poured forth. Behold woman ! in this little volume is written down not only your song, but some score of others, all of the same stamp—bearing the rude impress of rustic feeling—here they are ; one of the most striking is called ‘Nickie Neevison,’ and celebrates a harum-scarum, scandal-loving, wrinkled old maiden, with a humour which wants but a touch of classic grace, to render it resistless.”

“ Wonderful !” exclaimed the laird, “ who could have written it ; for lo ! here stands Nickie, the harum-scarum and the scandal-loving ;—I must learn this song, and sing it, when all other schemes of happiness fail.”

When the Laird of Drumdrousie said, “Here stands Nickie,” there she stood, a figure of wonder petrified ; her hands as yellow as the claws of the kite, held up and hovering in the air, and her eyes, cat gray and sore round the borders, as if faced with red plush, opened wide and grew quite circular, while a single speck of light in the middle twinkled and twinkled as if the moisture around threatened it with instant extinction. Down at once came her claws on the

book; and down, too, came a torrent of words of which the waterspout on the birth of Morison was but as a symbol—she emptied her wrath alternately, like a couple of buckets, on the two Philosophers."

"An ye'll come here, ye wee shilpit apology for man, wi' thae winnelstrae legs and winnel-skewed een, to gather idle rhymes reflecting on women of virtue and worth, like me ! An ye'll come too, ye lang slouching gypsey ne'er-deweel, wi' a face that wad make a corbie scunner, to aid and abet him there in gathering his paddock-stool verse ! Dye think I didna' ken ye the first moment I saw ye ! Laird, this wee ane was drappit out of the basket of Kate Candlish, the gypsey, and she wadna be fashed to stoop and take him up ; and this lang ane balanced spoons and kettles for three years to Black-at-the-bane of Lochmaben. I wad score their visages wi' my nails, but that wad make them mair warld like."

"Wondrous!" exclaimed the laird, "But though my two friends are lowly just now they, will get up soon—they will rise."

"They winna rise till a' ither folk are risen, laird," said Nickie, her wrath subsiding after the seizure of the book, and the emptying she had

given to her heart—"they will rise at the resurrection—and not till then."

A hasty step was heard on the floor, and Morison advancing, said, "What is the matter, mother—what is the matter?"

"Nothing, my son," said Mary; "these gentlemen have been speaking of matters which affected me, but it is over now."

"Over now!" said Nickie; "it's easily over wi' you—they have raised a storm that winna soon blow over wi' me. What d'ye think Morison, lad? I shall say nought about the song which was made on your birth, because the event was real; but somebody has made a scoffing song even on me, Nickie Neevison, and these twa skellums got a haud o't, along with the ane that yere mother whiles I sings, waefu' bodie: and they were gaun to sing them on the stage; but I trow I have settled the business—I hae drawn a thorn in that slap—but O, an I had a grip o' the loon, that made the sang!" And she extended her two thin skinny hands, bent her fingers, till the 'nails, seldom pruned, with which they were armed, seemed claws, and biting her lip, and winking, intimated the greeting in reserve for the slanderer.

“ Wondrous !” cried the laird. “ But it’s weel kenned I have nae talent that way.”

“ Naebody’s accusing you,” said Nickie, “ o’ ony thing that a man might be suspekit of—but I wadna wonder, if this misleared callant, Morison, kens mair about the sang than he lets on. Ah ! you loon, I see by your look it was you, the blood of the Roldans is up to a’ manner o’ deevilry.” There was forgiveness in her smile.

On retiring from the Elfin-glen, the laird of Drumdrousie said to his companions, “ Well, it is better that yon fool woman snatched the songs, and burned them ; no good could have come of printing them, but much evil. The poor woman, Mary as they call her, was averse to it ; and I am persuaded the lad Morison would have been no better pleased than his mother ; nay, I am convinced that he would have wrought some mischief on all and sundry far it. The Roldans are downright devils or real angels—they’re either all black or all white.”

“ I would have penned something about him that would have burned for ever, like a fixed star,” said Braunks ; “ those who meddle with me receive a brand which lasts to eternity.”

“ And mickle gude that wad do ye !” said

Nickie Neevison ; the Roldans are the lads that build houses for those they hate, whilk last through eternity. The boy Morison can bring the hawk from the lift wi' a single bullet ; and he could pit twenty holes in your waistcoat with the point of a sword, and yet no harm the skin."

"Awful !" said the laird ; "a born deevil ! It's weel that he's a bastard, and can come to nae rule in the land."

CHAPTER VIII.

A cozie ingle and a clean hearth-stane.

BURNS.

THE comfortable fire and the clean-swept floor required by the poet in his idea of rural happiness, were both present in the farmhouse of Howeboddom ; but the smile of the thrifty wife, and the prattle of numerous children, with which the picture in verse is completed, were absent. Nor will we venture to say that their place was supplied by either the kindly nature of a sister, or the active and cheerful diligence of servants ; yet it may be affirmed that moderate joy and modest happiness were of the household ; and that sunniness of the breast which is the inheritance of those who are active in well doing, was there as a constant and cheering light. The farm, or rather lairdship, of Howeboddom, was extensive ; the occupants were not only rich according to rumour, but were wealthy in reality ; and as they both

seemed inclined to lead a single life, the imagination of their neighbours was now and then employed in the charitable task of finding them heirs through which their wealth might realize the image of the poet, and run like fountains.

We have not forgotten to intimate that Jeanie Rabson was not only good-looking, but had a kind and a tender heart, on which Dominie Milligan was now and then making uncouth experiments, which scared the spinster rather than pleased her; but we have, we fear, said less than enough about her only brother, James—her elder by two years: a quiet, worthy man; well formed, too, with looks rather pleasing than intelligent; and who seemed always as if lost in a dream, save when great occasions roused him. He was, indeed, generally in a dream—a dream of early and unrequited love—he had, when a boy at school, become attached to Mary Morison; and as he grew up this was strengthened, till it grew into love—not love warm, blushing, and strong—all energy and passion—but love meek and gentle, indicated in looks and acts of attention and kindness; and which, we grieve to say it, has less success with beauty than it deserves. When the country was busy with her name and fame, all tongues were loud in the censure of the bonnie

lass of Elfin-burn, save those of Jeanie Rabson and her brother ; the latter said little indeed, but he felt much and rightly ; he was never provoked to mirth afterwards ; he forsook all society, save that of his sister, whom he tenderly loved ; and though he had always been charitable, he now opened his doors wider than ever to those wandering mendicants who, sometimes unworthily, roam the country and collect alms by calm solicitation, or clamorous importunity.

In such company the laird of Howeboddom seemed to take delight ; but though he was liberal to all, he was most indulgent to that unhappy class of vagrants who are touched in the intellect,

“ The moping idiot and the madman gay ;”

and that dubious specimen of insanity—hovering, as the Scots saying has it, between gowk and gor-hawk—the shrewd wittol—with humour, and even wit, and pranks partaking of both, and an idiot still. Scenes indecorous, and sometimes alarming, occurred at Howeboddom ; nevertheless, the strange elements which the laird’s hospitality gathered round his hall fire at night, were, in his hands, ductile as cream ; when their wildness was at its height, his look and word awed them into repose. All this, and other foibles, induced the neighbours to shake their heads, and whisper,

“The laird of Howeboddom’s no the thing he should be.” The shepherd said, in allusion to his own vocation, “The laird has got a straik o’ tar too much;” the ploughman averred that the laird’s sock had “owre mickle grun, and turned up jingle-stanes wi’ the rich mools;” the shoemaker said, his “boots had been sewed in a hard frost, and took in water at the welting;” the weaver declared that “the web of his understanding was pirnie;” the blacksmith said that “his intellect had been burned in the waulding heat;” and the mason muttered, “scrimp to the gage.”—In short, all trades and callings agreed that the gudeman of Howeboddom was rankled in the brain, save his sister, Jeanie, who observed, “Our James has nae sae mickle to say for himself as some I could name; but wha excels him in doing wise and sensible things? Let them that think him a fool, try to take him in; and them that ca’ him silly, try to gie him the breadth of his back.”

The night in which the house of Howeboddom appeared as we have hastily sketched it was Hallow-eve, when, in addition to the usual household, more than the usual number of wanderers appeared, allured no doubt by the hospitality of

the house of Rabson, as well as by the rustic charms and spells of the evening. These personages were seated apart from the family on a long-settle beyond the fire, which extended almost from side to side of the hall. First there was John Tamson, who carried a blackthorn staff which he called Fidum, three wallets with not less than a hundred weight of old iron, old crystal, and broken china; he was a preaching idiot, his pulpit was a midden-stead, his text hell-fire, and one could hear him a mile down the wind, so loud was his voice. Secondly there was Manting Will, so called from his stutter—he always carried a large stone in his hand, to fling he said at James Rabson's mickle duck—namely, the gander which he said bit him, and hissed him, and put him in fear of his life: he was wise enough to refuse to gather meal, for it was heavy and Will was lazy; nor did he love halfpence, for wealth had its inconveniences—all that he desired was a warm meal and a soft bed. He had no better clothing than rags, but always excellent shoes, which he obtained by a certain slight of hand he practised on a wider scale in early life.

The third personage was Kipp Cairns, a thin, earnest-looking old man, with a white head and

genteel air ; winter and summer he wore thread stockings, buckles in his shoes, and powder in his hair ;—he was an idiotic dandy, and had lost a fair estate. The laird in his youth thought himself irresistible among ladies, and his charms such, that he had only to offer and be accepted. A wily neighbour wagered his own estate against the laird's, that Miss Jenny Todd, of Lowrie-hole, would refuse him. Away started the laird, but found the lady on the way to the kirk to be married. He dreaded guns and pistols as much as Will did the Howeboddom gander ; and, moreover, he indulged in sallies of wit, which even the witty dreaded to encounter.

The fourth and last of the band, was Robin Wightman, who had more of oddity than of madness in his brain. He suspected all mankind ; and not without reason, for a cunning lawyer, whom he trusted, became lord of Robin's land, and turned him into the world with an ass and a load of tinware and pewter, to win his bread by. This ass was the only creature he cared for, and he pled hard to have it brought to the fireside at Howeboddom, “for bating the bray,” he said, “it could demean itself better than some Christians.”

There were an equal number of deranged

women. The first, and the noisiest, was Nannie Simm ; she was always scolding, save when eating, and then she held a staff in her hand with which she beat time to the motion of her lips ; Peggie Casey was the second ; though old she was still good looking, and active both in mind and body. We say mind—for if drink could be kept from Peggie, or Peggie from drink—she was at once wise, witty, and sagacious ; but the moment liquor entered her mouth, she seemed inspired by the demon of contradiction and mischief ; she leapt, she danced, she talked, and she sung, while all that she said, as well as all that she sung, was satirically aimed at those around ; for she knew every body, and could draw their characters with equal discernment and drollery. The third, was Nelly Caird ; she never was seen to smile, and she never spoke, without complaining of hunger ; she ate and drank till she alarmed her entertainers, and then declared she was starving, and kept together by a belt ; yet the belt was always loose. The fourth, was a lady-looking person of middle life ;—who sighed at every step, went bareheaded winter and summer, and was for many years accompanied by a couple of sheep, which she called her lambs—they lived as she lived, and often lay all night with her

in the fields ; no one knew her name, but all called her “ the Lady.”

Such was the company in Howeboddom. There were others, however, who if not mad, were oddities in their way. First, there was Dominie Milligan, who placed himself beside Jeanie Rabson, and to entertain her, entered into the history of the Carthaginians, to which the heiress listened with some attention, believing them to be a wild sept of people who lived in the Roons of Galloway, and brought the honey of that Hybla of Caledonia to perfection. Secondly, there was Nickie Neevison, who entered with a laugh, crying, “ Where’s Morison Roldan ?—he’ll never rhyme mair : I can beat him a’ to sticks at riving the words to gaur them clink. What do you think I have done, Jeanie Rabson ? I went to Drumdrousie house, and speered for the gowk and the titlin ; our twa learned, philosophical and critical friends, as the laird calls them—ye need na glower that way, Dominie, I have used the right words ;—weel, ye see, out they came, and I becked and put on a hypocritical mouth, and tauld them that I had got a capital auld bal- lant for them, worth ten of the stuff I so rashly burnt : and what d’ye think I did ? I raved

out a lang screed o' rhyme of my ain making—
as sure as ye're there Jeanie—they swallowed
it like sweet milk ; Braunks repeated it, as I re-
peated it ; Blynders wrote it down as if it had
been a judgment o' the fifteen, and the laird
cried, ‘ Wondrous !’ Am na I clever—O, sly,
inventfu’, revengeful Nickie Neevison !”

“ Woman !” said the Dominie, “ ye have done
an indiscreet thing ; first ye have told an un-
truth to two learned, philosophical, and critical
gentlemen ; and secondly, ye have passed off
your own ravings upon them, for the genuine
inspiration of the muse ; thereby spreading a
false report, and bringing discredit upon the
genius of the district. Woman ! how know ye
that you have not prevented me from laying
before them, even at Drumdrousie house, the
first book of my own epic poem, on the woes,
which are prophesied to fall on Scotland, when
certain natural events happen—there is to be a
battle, to which that of Armageddan will be but
as a cockfight. What saith True Thomas ?”

“ ‘ When Solway Flow shall take to the sea,
The battle of the Sorrosyke Moor shall be.’ ”

“ And a braw poem you have written, Do-

minie," said Nickie, who heard of it now for the first time. "A braw poem, and a soothing; I was gaun by yere house ae night, when ye were receeting it;—O! yon's the poetry, Jeanie Rabson, when ye court sleep, and canna find it, send for the Dominie: if the first sax lines dinna bring down yere eelids, then his verse winna do for you what it did for me."

"Woman, woman!" exclaimed the exasperated Dominie, "you are made of nothing but untruths."

"Then I am the better poet, Dominie; thank ye for the compliment; now, man, if ye could just compliment Jeanie Rabson there as cleverly, ye kenna what might happen at Howebottom; heiress, he looks unco kirr, take tent of your heart."

"Who talks of tining hearts?" exclaimed Kipp Cairns. "I tint a fair estate; the man who got it planted it all with nettles and thorns, and I canna get to the door of my ain house without tearing my silk stockings."

"Flint, fire, hell, and Hades!" shouted John Tamson. "What's the sting of a nettle and the jag of a thorn to the scorching of eternal fire? I see it!—I see it!—there it burns and

rages ! I'll haud Manting Will owre't, till the buckles melt in his shoon !”

“ Ye see into hell,” said Robin Wightman ; “ tell me, dinna ye see the saul of Writer Jock roasting in’t ? If ye dinna see that, ye are looking into the wrang place.”

“ D’ye see ony roast meat ?” said Nelly Caird ; “ I havena tasted food this fortnight : I’m falling asunder ; I think I could eat it, even if auld Clootie himself had turned the spit.”

“ Will ye tell me, John,” said Kipp Cairns, in a mild, inquiring voice, “ if ye see purgatory ? It should be near hell, ye ken.”

“ I see nothing,” exclaimed the madman, starting up, and looking fearfully down ; “ I see nothing but one boundless, blazing pit ; I hear nothing but the groans of the tortured. Hark ! did ye no hear a voice crying, come, John Tamson, there’s blude on your hand ; come and wash it in boiling brimstone ! ”

“ If ye see only a boundless blazing pit,” said Kipp Cairns, “ then the stake-and-ryse dyke between hell and purgatory is burned down ; and what will become of Lady Winifred Roldan when it’s a’ ae pit ? ”

“ I never saw so many daft fowk together be-

fore," said Peggy Casey, in a tone of offended wisdom; "Howeboddom, if ye winna rebuke them into silence, I maun do it." She rose as she spoke, and extending her hands, called with a loud voice, "From this hour till that of supper, let all those that are wise close their mouths, and let all those that are daft open them: we have had of wisdom sufficient for ae night." She sat down, and all approved.

All this time the laird of Howeboddom sat motionless in a large arm-chair, fashioned for his great grandfather out of a solid oak-tree, found fifteen feet deep in Howeboddom morass: the hands which made it were equally familiar with scripture as with edge-tools, for there were sand-glasses, and swords, and brief texts, scattered wherever space was afforded; nay, in the panel behind, a bible lay open at the 53d chapter of Isaiah; so that wherever the occupier turned himself, he either saw or felt something holy. The laird seemed unconscious of all these things; nor did he for once glance his eye above him, where whole sides of bacon, hams spiced and dried; and more savoury morsels still, such as tongues and tender mutton hams, were neatly papered; and ell long staves of thorn, ash, and oak, for couples to flails, hung orderly, row-

above row ; while amongst the whole, the smoke from a fire of mingled peat and wood streamed freely, on its way to the open air. He sat ; nor heeded the company assembling around him, further than when a new guest was admitted, he would say, “Come away, Bankhead ;” “I’m glad to see you, Maryfield ;” “This is a fine Hallow-mass, Boatrigg ; how’s the lasses ? Aye, there they are, God bless them !” From his frequent glances towards the door, it was plain that he looked for some one who had not yet come ; the door opened, but his solicitude was not rewarded. “Come away, John Anderson ; and come here, Pennie Hudlestane ; and come near me, Mattie Anderson—nae marvel that they ca’ ye bonnie.” The guests sat down, but still the laird looked towards the door. At length he could keep quiet no longer : “What’s become of the bairn ?” he said ; “Jeanie Rabson, are ye sure that ye invited the boy ?”

“He’ll be here belyve, laird,” said Jeanie ; “he’ll be here belyve. Ye maun ken, sirs, that it is Morison Roldan that my brither ca’s the bairn ; he’s nae bairn now, weel I wot, but a handsome lad, wi’ a winning tongue, and a glance that gars mae hearts than ane gae starting. Is na that true, Mattie Anderson ?”

The young woman thus unexpectedly appealed to gave her head a toss east and her head a toss west, and with a sneer on her rosie face, said, “Ye maun ask at them that see mair in him than I do.” She seemed prepared to say more, but her mother, the aforesaid Pennie, took the word out of her mouth. “Ye say weel, Mattie, my lass: I dinna thank them that first likened my daughter, wha, wi’ a’ her faults, came honestly into the world—that likened my daughter, I say, wha has money o’ her ain and expectancies frae her uncle, besides sureties frae us—wi’ a penniless lad, born on the wrang side o’ the blanket.” She had risen a little up to give impulse to her words; and on concluding them, she sat down with a soss that made the chair creak. Jeanie Rabson looked at the laird, the laird looked at Jeanie—both were ready to speak, but the laird spoke first.

He sat upright in his chair to give force to his words. “What need for a’ this scorn? My bairn Morison’s shadow is a picture; the like o’ him for looks and ability is no in the country side. Na doubt the Fourmerkland is a pretty place, but I trow the Howeboddom is a bonnier; and the heir o’ the latter, and that shall be Morison, may haud up his head wi’ the heiress o’ the former ony day between Beltane and Beltane: what need is there

for a' this scorn?" Just as he concluded, the door opened, and Morison entered, shaking the snow from his hat. "Ye come the last, and bring winter wi' ye, my bairn," said the laird; "come up to my right hand here—there now! how hale ye look; study disnae bewilder yere brain as it did mine. Dominie, yere scholar's a credit to you, I'm tauld—but a truce wi' further speech. Jeanie—Jeanie Rabson: wherefore dinna ye bring forward the dishes, wi' clean water and foul; the napps wi' apples, to have a dive; the nuts, that lads and lasses may be partnered, and spell their fate. I myself have the pock of hemp-seed for adventurous hands to saw; and I give ilka ane liberty to pouk my stacks, pou my kale-stocks, and winnow weghts o' naething." As the laird spoke, the materials with which superstitious or humorous belief wrought or pretended to work miracles on Hallow-eve were produced; the Dominie alone lifted up his voice against them. "Not," said he, "that I object to honest hilarity, or even to the buttered sowens at supper; but oh! an ye be Christians, wherefore will ye tempt Providence by indulging in darksome rites?"

To the rites, dark or bright, the more youthful part of the company proceeded, evidently re-

garding Dominie Milligan's remonstrance as a thing of course, to keep matters straight with his conscience. "I shall begin with what is near my heart," said Pennie Hudlestane; "here's twa nuts, fair and comely: the tane represents Morison there, and the other Mattie Anderson; that they may burn sweetly and kindly, is the wish of my gudeman as well as me."

Morison, who remembered the scorn showered upon him both by mother and daughter, marvelled how this change had taken place; he looked at Mattie and Mattie returned his glance with interest: and the goodman of the Fourmerkland looked at both, and seemed to regard them as his children.

"Ye may save yeresels the trouble of all this," said Nanse Halberson. "No that I object to the burning of twa nuts any more than to the eating of twa kernels, but Morison Roldan has anither destiny before him;—and no meaning disrespect to Mattie Anderson, who is baith rich and weel faured, and is aware of the same—the deer mauna lie down in the dog's hole; his is to be a brighter lot."

The goodman of Fourmerkland waxed wroth on this. "It's weel kenned, Nanse, that ye are uncannie, and nought gangs weel wi' either

milkness or bestial, unless ye wish it. I call that forspeaking my bairn, and if ony ill happens to Mattie, ye had best look to it."

"She has already commenced wi' her cantraips on the nuts," said Pennie,—"there! what a start and a fluff! she lies as quiet as a lamb, and he is up the chimley."

"Wha talks of cantraips?" said John Tamson, starting madly up; "and who seeks fortune in fire? O that ye had sic a heat at your heart as I have! a' the water of Tynron burn winna sloken't. Some gang to hell a thousand years after death; some step frae the deathbed into the burning brimstone, and some are there while they are in the body; and if ony body ask ye wha they are, ye may say John Tamson's ane o' them. D'ye see yon lang-backed black deevil, wi' een like lamps, and claws like muck dregs, looking down the lum? mony a time he has me on his back, and gaes laumping through the hottest dubs of perdition. Yet for a' that the red blude's on this hand." And he sat down extending his hand over the embers till the skin cracked, before he was stopped; saying, with a tone as if a millstone had been lifted from his bosom, "Ah! it's whiter now—it's whiter now, and the buxom bride canna refuse me for't."

While all were shocked with the words of the madman, and all eyes were on him, the outer door was swung suddenly against the wall ;—a heavy step was heard on the floor, and before the form that approached was visible to all, a rough, loud, strange voice, exclaimed, “ I seek eight of my people ; men say they are mad, but I say wicked—wicked ; they are all of them sinners, and the weight that lies on their hearts, and makes them frantic, is sin. Listen till I call them, and note ye their ways, and see if my words are not those of wisdom.” A strange tremour seemed to strike all the eight mendicants at once ; nor was it allayed when the stranger stalked into the middle of the floor : he was bare-headed ; his hair was matted and long, and so was his beard ; he held a lantern in his hand, made out of a scooped turnip, and ever as he moved it, the light, which smouldered in it, glimmered like that of his eyes, which were large and sunken. All saw he was mad ; but his face was unknown, even to the laird of Howe boddom.

“ Where are my people,” he exclaimed, “ on a night when beings which should be in hell are abroad ? aye, there ye sit at a douce man’s board as if ye werena marked by the brand of Satan, and doomed for the pit. John Tamson, how

dare ye to sit there wi' the pedler's blood red on yere right hand and three score of his silver crowns in your wallets!—I see ye understand. And ye too sit cosh beside him, Margaret Macdonald, whom the children call Casey. Where have ye the garters, of a blue and white stripe, with which ye strangled yere babe?—I see ye understand. William Rorison, whom we call Manting Will, look up: the bleat of Howebodom's sheep is still in your lug.—I see ye understand. And you Helen Caird, whom boys call Nelly Weems, to the dishonour of an auld tune. Ye have often bared the hedge and the hen-roosts when folk blamed the tinkers, and the tinkers were far away.—Aye, I see ye understand, too. Your turn's next—ye are the lady, that never wears a mutch, and wanders wi' the silly sheep, as if ye were innocent as when ye wandered amang the lilies of Naworth gardens. I'll say nae mair—I see ye understand. And you Robert Wightman, whom bairns call Yauping Robin, and douce fowk condole wi' for the loss of the bonnie Mary-holm, I will neither nickname ye, nor condole wi' you; when ye were rich, ye were hard-hearted, and close-handed wi' the poor and the needy; and if God deprived ye of your grounds and gave them to a knave, be-

cause ye turned the widow and her three babes from your door on a winter night, and bade her find a bed amang the wreaths of snaw, where she was a stiff corse in the morning, wha will say that your afflictions are undeserved?"

Not a soul spoke or stirred: the mad people cowered and shrunk as hounds when whipped or rated; even Nickie Neevison was awed. She could only mutter, "'Tis Hallowmass, and this maun be auld Cloots himsel, since he kens a' things. Is he no done yet? I wonder whether he considers me daft or no.—I have doubts on't mysel now and then."

He looked anxiously at the bench, and fixing his eye on Kipp Cairns, stepped suddenly forward, seized him by the arm, and hurrying him to a corner of the room, placed him on a chair, took a seat beside him, and with a loud laugh said, "Man ye pozed us! On Hallowmass-eve the power is given to me to see the evil deeds which the seed of man commit written on their brows; there's nought of the kind written on thine. Ye are neither more nor less than a fool, and yere seat should be with the righteous.—James Rabson of Howeboddom, wherefore d'ye no come and greet yere guest.—I am the spirit that appeared to Brutus, and promised to meet him at Phillipi: I am he who ap-

peared to James Stuart in Stirling, and warned him of Flodden : and, lastly, I am the dark and evil shape that follows in the steps of the Roldans, rejoicing when they err, and awaiting release from earth in the downfal of their house and name."

"Spirit or man—or God or devil," said Morison Roldan springing up and confronting the stranger, "I shall know who you are before we part. Ye say ye rejoice in the errors of my name and await the downfal of my house that ye may be released from earth—explain your words ; they are a mystery."

"I am a mystery as well as my words," answered the stranger. "Know ye not young man, that two spirits one of evil and one of good have charge of the house of Roldan. The barons of that name have sometimes dared to evoke and question them. The bright spirit can only be seen in the Ladye Chapel, on the first night of the full moon of July ; but the bad spirit can be seen always. Would you know more ?"

"You have told me nothing that I have not heard before," said Morison ;" but God pity you ! so far from being aught superhuman, I see you are less than man ; a poor mad creature, escaped from restraint to scare others till they go as mad as yourself."

“I am a spirit,” said the stranger, “and on this eve I am permitted to come abroad. I have walked the quicksands of Solway—my feet are wet. I have glided over the shaking-bogs of Locher—see I caught this Jack-a-lantern: and I lighted on the schoolhouse-top, and called on the name of John Milligan; but there was a dumb silence, and the voice of learning was mute in the land.”

Dominie Milligan seemed recalled by these words, from a sort of trance; he muttered, “It’s him, and it’s no him, and yet it’s him too.” And rising and coming forward, said, “If ye are a spirit, sit still and say nought; but if ye are Willie, of Starryheugh, speak to me for I am John Milligan.”

A cloud seemed to be lifted from the stranger at once; the wild excitement of his looks departed; he passed his hands over his brow, and smiting his knees with his palms, and stooping his head upon them appeared to shudder:—he looked up, and said, “William was my name once; and Starryheugh was my habitation; but my name now is Plotcock, and my home is in a damp cavern, and instead of gloves on my hands, and silk stockings on my legs, I wear bands of iron; and for the sound of Greek

or Latin song, I hear cursing and swearing ; and though a spirit myself, I am beaten by one stronger, and whipped till the flesh seems parting from my bones."

" Alas !" said the Dominie, mournfully to Morison, " behold the brightest of all Scotland's scholars ; in the race of fame he was foiled by one not half so swift as himself, but who had the god Mammon for his partner : the upshot is a madhouse--chains and stripes. But come home, even now, with me, my poor, unhappy friend ; thou art as harmless as the breeze of May ; —thou shalt live with me, and during the weary nights we shall sing a Greek song together—my children will not harm one from whom we may all derive information."

The Dominie took him by the hand, and as he led him unresisting away, the laird of Howeboddom, said, " I shall double the dues I owe the school for this ; but I trow for a time I thought he was na in the body, but was a spirit, aye, and a black ane."

" I ay thought I kenned him," said Nickie Neevison, " but daft here or daft there, he kens mair than he ought to ken ; what fine characters he drew of our feal friends ayont the fire there ! By my troth, Howeboddom, ye keep queer

company. But how wiselike he talked about the twa spirits of the house of Roldan ! Nanse Halberson ye ken all things, what say ye to the guardian spirits ? this is just the night to talk about them."

" I hae my ain doubts," said Nanse, gravely, " anent the dark ane ; but concerning the bright ane there's na doubt ; She appears, for it's a ladye-spirit, to all whose veins are warmed with the blude of Roldan, and shows them their future fate—whilk means that she points out the path to glory and honour, and to ruin and perdition, then lets them choose."

" That's awsome ! but Nanse, does the spirit come in the likeness of a woman ?" inquired Jeanie Rabson

" Atweel, does she," answered the other, " and a bonnie woman too ; Mattie Anderson there's weel faured, but she's a spunkie to a star, compared wi' the ladye-spirit of the house of Roldan."

" Away wi' yere comparisons, ye uncannie limmer," said Pennie Hudlestane, sharply, " d'ye think that a shape of moonshine, or a creature formed o' ragwort, is equal to a sonsie lass of warm flesh and blood ?"

" My words are true, nevertheless, gudewife,"

said Nanse, “and Morison there, where he sits sae cozie, whispering wi’ your daughter, will prove it before his teens are done,”

“Aye,” said the goodwife, “young flesh and blood will e’en draw together; we were ance young ourselves, Nanse, lass, and loved to run round about the corn-ricks, and scream, that ane we liked might catch us.”

“I mind o’ nae sic pranks,” said the goodman of Fourmerkland, “ye maun hae screamed Pennie to other grips than mine.”

“The laird’s in his tantrums now, Nanse; but naebody minds him, mair nor me,” whispered Pennie; “I keep the keys, lass; sae come yere ways up ony forenoon ye like to Fourmerkland, and ye shall carry hame as mickle butter and cheese as yere back can bear. I’m saying let thae young things blaw in ilk other’s lugs there, and should there be ony thing rising to cross their love, will ye stop it, or tell me o’t—we a’ ken Nanse, that yere wiser than other people.”

“What is to be, maun come to pass,” said Nanse; “I shall cast na cantraips atweel to spill the love o’ twa kindly young things; but what’s to be the fate of Morison, the spirit of his fathers’ will tell him, and that soon.”

The youthful pair were now left to themselves,

and seated side by side, conversed without interruption. It cannot be denied, that Morison had a sort of hankering regard for the heiress of Fourmerkland, nor had the maiden, till of late shown any disinclination for his company. The change in his favour, had been wrought to-night by the declaration of the laird of Howeboddom: the hopes of such a fair inheritance could not be resisted, and Morison, though born as Pennie said, on the wrong side of the blanket, was at once invested with all the qualities, which a farm worth five hundred a-year, and bills and bonds, and money laid out at interest, could bestow. For a while he wondered at the affectionate looks and soft and yielding words of his mistress, but he saw they were not dissembled, and he repaid them with looks and language, such as seldom fail to succeed, when they come from the handsome and the wealthy.

“ Mattie,” he said, “ I am poor, but I am young, and my hand is ready, and my head is none of the dullest, and what I want in wealth, I shall make up in love.”

“ Morison,” answered the maiden, “ ye are rich enough for me; when I sat aside ye in the school, and ye were helping me with my lesson—though I was na sae dull of the uptake as Tibbie

Wilson and Kate Macturk—I thought then how weel you would look should it sae happen that ye were to become maister of the Fourmerkland. Even now, I can beat my mother in weighing the butter sharp and the wool scrimp in the scale, and she says I am sneller than herself in managing the siller."

"But, Mattie," said Morison, "ye must not let this desire of gain, outrun what is just; ye should give down weight like the wife of Auchan-gibbard, wha put one leg of a pair of two-pound tongs in the scale and let the other hang out, when she weighed a pound of butter."

"That's aye your way, Morison," said the maiden, "ye never will speak seriously about ony thing; but I'm serious now. What may be the worth of Howeboddom annually, think ye? and how muckle money has the laird and Jeanie laid out at interest? It's no that I care, but I am interested in your friends, ye ken."

"These are matters which I have never inquired into," replied he; "all that I know is, that Jeanie Rabson has one of the kindest hearts and the laird ane of the freest hands in all Glengarnock. Much, much, Mattie, have they done for me since I remember, and what must they have done for me before I remember, when I was a

helpless bairn in my mother's lap, and she had no friend, save God, and Jeanie Rabson."

"I marvel ye dinna think of marrying Jean Rabson yersel, since ye think sae mickle on her," said the heiress of Fourmerkland, with a toss of her head.

"I couldna love her mair," said Morison, "were we to be married the morn; but she never intends to marry, she says, and her brother never intends to marry, which is a pity: the like of them are scarce in the land."

"Wha talks of marrying?" said Kipp Cairns; "didna I lose the broad mains of Kappenock, just because I was a hour owre lang in asking the bonnie lass of Lowrie-hole. I might hae married wha I like sinsyne, but thiere's nae love like a first love, sae I gang single; but I can tell ye I have enough to do: there's the lady of Scrimpton—she looked at me yesterday; ye never saw sic looks!"

"I'll gie an advice, bairn," said Peggie Casey; "love's a charmed fire, and ye may burn yere hands when ye but think o' heating them: wherefore do I not marry? I hae wale of offers, but when the names are asked in the kirk, a deevilish voice cries ay, 'Never wed wi' ane that

wears blue and white garters'—I ken what that means ;" and she hid her face in her hands.

" When ye want siller," said John Tamson, " to set up house wi', dinna gang to a pedler for't ; for if ye gie him a squeeze owre mickle in the getting it, he'll haunt ye a' yere days—there, I see him now ! there's as mickle blude rinning down his bosom as wad turn a mill. Flint, fire, hell, and Hades ! men are all sinners by nature, and sinners by practice ; and the jaws of that fiery leviathan, the pit, are gaping to swallow us up !"

" I wish the buttered sowens were ready," said Nelly Caird ; " I havena tasted God's living these three weeks ; I wad fall asunder, were it no for this band ! "

The wish of the ravenous mendicant was gratified : a meal, the smoke of which was enough, Nickie Neevison declared, to supper the rattons in the thatch, soon appeared on the board ; a grace, suddenly pronounced by one of the madmen—" Ram horns apiece, and elbow-room," was the indecorous signal to fall on, and not a word was said, though a score of mouths were open for a quarter of an hour at least. As the company arose to depart, " Take care," said the laird of

Howeboddom, “as ye gang through the Foul-sykes; something has aye been seen there on Hallowmass-eve since Joe Dingwall was murdered by Rab Johnston, the tinker; and take heed as ye skirt Largnane wood; the tree’s still there on which Christy Sautpowks pat down himsel—the branch, ye will see’t, owrehangs the road—and folk threep, as the night comes round, they see his form hanging atween them and the blue sky.”

“Ye hae forgotten, laird,” said Nickie Neevison,” to warn them against crossing the Pennystane burn;—in the very howe of the glen, where the hoodie craw biggs, didna douce Walter Irving find a green table covered with fine meats, and fragrant wi’ wine, wi’ four-and-twenty fairies carousing—and was he ever the same man again after he drank of the Elfland wine?”

“And I warn ye a’—mair especially ye Fourmerkland folk,” said Nanse Halberson, “to walk warily over the Pennystane-craft; if there’s a witch in all the south, she is sure to be there, and may gie some of ye a ride as far as the moon.”

“O, Jean,” said the laird to his sister when alone, “what a twofold lesson have we had this blessed night! I canna tell whether maist to

pity those poor bereaved creatures now stretched on their sacks and strae, or the laird of Fourmerkland. How he lap, like a cock at a grozel—him, and wife, and daughter, when we hinted that Morison wad be laird of Howeboddom: they are a selfish race and a warldly."

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CHAPTER IX.

But warily tent when ye come to court me,
And come na unless the back yett be ajee ;
Then up the back stile, and let naebody see,
And come as ye werena coming to me.

BURNS.

WHEN Morison and the young heiress of Fourmerkland arrived at the place where the roads sundered towards their different homes, their conversation had grown of a confidential nature.

“ If ye are na afraid,” said the maiden, “ of the cloud of night, and the lonesome road, ye might find yere way to Fourmerkland on Monday night —but now that I think on’t, we had better say Tuesday. There’s aye a light at my window till late—the wee window that looks up the burn. I have the accounts of the day to sort, and the results of bargains to set down. But ye are na heeding what I say. Mind now that my mother’s but light-sleepit, sae walk softly, and dinna come brainging at the front gate, but slide cannily in by the kale-yard slap.—Will ye mind a’ this now ? ”

It was no needless question that the heiress asked. Morison heard her as if he heard her not; he was in truth considering whether he had not better, with one who promised to be so close and selfish, to come to a clearance in courtship at once; but the night and hour of tryste being named, he could not without affronting her whom he dreaded he could not love—decline the interview; he accepted it, bade good-night, and hastened home to the Elfin-glen.

We are afraid that not a few of our readers—for we trust this true history will find many—will be inclined to think slightly both of Morison's head and heart when they are informed that when Monday night came he began to prepare for the tryste with Mattie Anderson. They will one and all exclaim, “Tuesday night—the heiress said Tuesday night,” and so no doubt she did; but the wooer, from reasons we have assigned, only heard Monday night named, and so faintly, that it seemed to him as a dream: he had a vague notion too that Tuesday was also mentioned; but he said to himself, “The road is short to nimble feet like mine, and the light at her window—I am right, I know, in that—will settle all. On Monday Morison began to prepare for his visit. All who have felt the ardour of young

enthusiastic love need not be informed that he did not wait till night for such preparation ; long before the sun sunk down to the hill, he had looked from the glen-head, at the line of road—tried on, shifted, and tried again various parts of dress ; and thought his neckcloth more reluctant than he ever found it before to take a handsome tie. His hair he shook back and combed forward, and though nature had so disposed it that no mistaken labour could altogether hurt its waving beauty, he gave up the arrangement in despair and not without a smile at his own vanity.

The sun sunk slowly—slower, indeed, than Morison ever remembered it ; the moon had arisen—her horns were half filled and there was a storm intimated in her looks, for it did not escape him that she lay almost on her back, and shone gloomy and watery. His mother who had no idea of his tryste, added to his anxiety by a flow of conversation concerning the ancient warriors of the house of Morison ; and though she observed that he did not listen with his usual attention to deeds of arms, reaching from days when “gude King Robert rang,” to the “fatal Forty Five,” she talked away, never suspecting that she had not a faithful listener.

She made a full pause at the end of the family history, and said, "Morison, I am proud of your looks, though I shouldna be sae, seeing they are an accident of nature; but I am prouder of your mind which is every day growing more and more manly. The feelings of your time of life—for ye will be seventeen at Beltane—are, I can perceive, coming on you, for you are more careful of your dress, and more anxious about your person, than formerly; though, blessed be the Maker, you were never amiss: now my dear bairn let one admonish ye, who has dearly earned the right, to be careful of the company ye keep. I dinna mean the lads; ye are unco weel that way, in a' respects, save that boy Davie Gellock, whom I suspect will turn out a ne'erdoewel;—but I mean the maidens, Morison, my love; O, dinna throw yere young heart away to some giglet wi' blue een and sunny hair and an acre of peatmoss; the first love is seldom weel and wisely placed; look twice afore ye loup: dinna make a promise that will ruin ye in the keeping; but lay out yere love on a young creature with a kind heart;—she ought to be bonnie, too—and if she has siller, she winna be the waur. Gude night, my bairn, and mind what a mother has said."

Morison retired—for it was nigh the hour of rest—to his little chamber; he heard his mother bolt the door and also pray that he might be delivered from the tempter now, when his hour of trial was nigh; he also heard her pray that it might not be God's will that he should fall in love with one above his degree—as one—and sorely was she punished for it—had done. What she desired, was a young, weel-faured, virtuous, thrifty quean, who would keep the house in order, and haud gear together.

Morison smiled and thought that Mattie Anderson was made to suit; he opened the window with a careful hand, slipped into the open air, and making his way to the hill-side looked by the light of the moon far and wide over Glengarnock.

As he passed a scathed oak, where the road branched away to the castle of Roldan, a voice cried, “Ah, Morison, lad! whither away so fast?—but I can guess—ye have a tryste wi’ the muse, and ye are gaun to seek her at the Four-merkland.”

“ Nanse Halberson,” said Morison, with a blush and a smile, “ if Pennie Hudlestane had heard ye say that, she would have called ye a witch of a guesser. But I am come out to indulge in my own thoughts; I aye think they rise

higher when all sounds save those of the wind or the stream are asleep. Ye are gaun hame and have a burthen—let me carry it.”

The burthen was transferred to Morison. “But ye mauna take such lang steps,” said Nanse, “ gif ye want me to haud up wi’ you—ye are owre yauld for me. Ye’ll want now to ken what a witch’s burthen is made of—listen and I sall tell thee. First, there’s a cheese, a piece of cauld crud I doubt, which was gien me by the gudeman of Grupemgle; to be considerate wi’ his bestial; there’s a gude pint of honey—nane of Dominie Milligan’s shilpit southern pints whilk he teaches ye in the school, but a gracious Scotch pint—gien me, too, by the kind open hand of Jeanie Rabson: then there’s meal warm frae the mill-ee; barley as gude as ever was wat wi’ water; and a full half-stane of beef all frae the liberal hand of the gudewife of Netherholm. This is ane of my days of lifting kane. The honey was a come-be-chance, and is owre and aboon bargain.”

“Really, Nanse,” said Morison, laughing, “ye are quite a princess, and the people of Glen-garnock are your subjects—what more could a queen have?”

“Indeed, and that’s true,” she said. “But O

consider, lad ! it comes mair from fear than affection—but here's the sindrins of the roads ; gie me back my burthen, and then for a parting word. Now Morison, my bairn—I aye ca' ye my bairn—and if it was na for my evil repute, I wish ye were. In the first place, d'ye see yon moon ? she has a tempest in her arms, and will thraw it forth, and that wi' vengeance : now look yonder, where there's three fair stars—d'ye ken what they are looking down on ?”

“ They are right above the Ladye Chapel,” said Morison ; “ and see, one of them has fallen—how beautifully it shot, making all the hills and woods gleam !”

“ Ye are right, it is owre the Ladye Chapel—now Morison, Lord of Roldan—aye, and higher than that if ye guide yere natural genius right—think of the weird of your name—the spirit you wot of has yet to cross your path : ye will see her before your teens are out, else ye are na your father's son.” She went on her way as she spoke, and Morison glad to be released from her restraint, but marvelling at her words, hastened towards Fourmerkland.

But though Morison was swift of foot, the storm fairly outran him. The stars seemed suddenly blotted out ; the wind came with an angry

and then an angrier gust; rain began to patter among the shrunken leaves, but not satisfied with such a sprinkling, it rushed down from the clouds at once, making the fields smoke and sparkle in the vehemence of its descent.

Morison muttered, "I think it is written that every obstacle this land can oppose is to stand in the way of my tryste to-night. First, the love of my mother; secondly, the meeting with cannie Nanse as they call her; and now this storm;—but a wetting is no more to me than dew is to a flower." Of this dew he was likely to have abundance, for the whole heaven was now as black as ink; the firmament of clouds resting on the line of hills, bellied down into the valley, and seemed to swallow it up. The sea, however, was silent—or rather could not be heard for the rising roar of the moorland streams.

To Morison the storm, though he accused it of an intent to impede his journey, was welcome rather than otherwise. A drenching was not to be regarded by one exposed as he had been to the free descent of the elements from his childhood. A shepherd or a hind after a soaking seems dry and comfortable compared to a citizen so exposed; the latter shrinks at the visitation, and looks like a drenched hen under a water-cart, while the

other comes out of the shower unscathed, like a duck from the stream. There were other reasons for his not taking the storm greatly to heart. "Well blow your best and rain your worst," he said, "it will show Mattie Anderson that I am true to my word, and ready to brave any thing for her sake. I like Mattie—she smiled on me when others frowned, and though there is something like selfishness about her, her love for me cannot be so: she is an heiress, and what, alas! am I? a poor landless, birthless being. She has noble feelings, since her love can triumph over such impediments."

As he uttered these last words he started back, and gazed with horror in his looks, and well he might. He had set his foot on the end of the Routan-bridge, so called from the continual din and roar of the water some seventy feet below, and was about to step forward when the massive arch vanished from before him, and plunging into the boiling chasm, threw up the flood and foam as high as the surrounding hills and uttered a roar which was heard through a dozen glens. The sudden flooding of the brook—it was little better—had shaken the masonry, for the bridge was new, and of all the beautiful structure which seemed suspended by magic over the

stream nothing remained but a single ring of arch stones, surmounted by the parapet. Morison eyed it for a moment: then springing on the wall ran nimbly along the line of stone, and reaching the end, sprang full fifteen feet forward and alighting among the grass, turned round with something of a shudder at the danger he had dared. His danger had been greater than he imagined; the parapet which trembled under his feet as he rushed across it, was now loosening and losing its balance: and Morison in after life was heard to declare, that he never felt real terror but at that bridge of dread, when he saw the very way over which he had ventured vanish like a wreath of mist and plunge into the foaming caldron below.

He paused but for a moment, and making his way to Fourmerkland, entered the garden by the appointed gate; groped his way with difficulty to the house, led by a faint line of light which issued from Mattie's window. He took off his plaid, which coiled round his body, shepherd fashion, had kept him dry to the knees, and arranging his dress with as much care as might be, where he had utter darkness for his glass, and a kaleyard for his chamber, he laid his hand on the latch of the back door, and was about to

go in, when he saw a figure enter by the way which he had come, to whose feet the path seemed familiar. The dove knows the hawk when but newly escaped from the shell, with its gorlin down upon it, and attacks it at once; the hen knows the fox when blind and but a week old, and raises her wings and attacks with neb and spur. Morison could not at the moment name the person who now almost reached him, but he felt he was a foe—that undefined feeling—that repulsive sensation—which intimates an enemy, came upon him; he turned round and advanced upon the intruder at once.

This unlooked for adventurer, probably imagining Morison to be one of the hinds of the house, retreated at first with the fleetness of a greyhound; through kale rows, and gooseberry bushes he dashed, without hesitation, and shutting the wicket behind him, escaped to the lawn or rather field, and seemed disposed to retreat no farther. Morison, whose blood was up—for he now perceived that his opponent was young, and probably a rival—leaped over the garden fence, and made at once to his adversary; the latter fled again, and made for the wood, which descending from the hills skirted the valley, and by its thick

undergrowth of holly, afforded protection to whatever creature courted it. Morison, whose celerity of foot was remarkable, came almost within touch of the other, when turning a thick roan of bushes, there stood a horse, with a rough burly hind holding the bridle. As the fugitive mounted, Morison seized him by the foot, and heaved him headlong into the bushes of bramble and stubbed thorn on the other side; he then bestowed a blow on the horse, which caused it to bolt forward, prostrating the hind who held it, and who had hitherto stood gaping wide, but saying nothing.

Having accomplished this feat, Morison hastened back, entered the kaleyard, opened the back door, which he found on the latch, and with a foot, which even the jealous ear of a mother could not detect, ascended to the room where Mattie awaited him. She had been listening for his coming;—she opened her chamber-door, then stept back, and even made a motion as if to shut it. He either did not perceive this, or took no notice of it, but folding her in his arms, imprinted one kiss at least, on her lips, and whispered, “Heaven and earth seemed united to prevent me keeping tryste. Mattie, you look as if you did not expect that I could have braved three

miles of wild road, on a wild night—with witches to stay me, and broken briggs to mar me—but here I am, and here is more than reward ;” and he kissed her again.

Mattie, if she had lost her composure by this sudden, and as it appeared, unexpected apparition of her lover, regained it in a moment, and said, “ This is not Tuesday, at e’en, Morison, but no matter, ye aye liked to be head of the class and foremost in the race ; there ye see, I have not been forgetful ; the way is lang and the weather rough ; sit down and warm ye at the fire, and cheer yersel with creature comforts.” She pointed to a chair beside the small but glowing fire, and to a little table on which some household delicacies were placed.

Morison smiled and said, “ Some lovers might be tempted by the sweet things of your table, but I care only for yourself ; so set these dainties aside ; I did not come here to taste and speak of your wine or of your honey—he that loves deeply and passionately has food enough.”

Mattie opened the window and looked out on the night ; “ The wind and the rain have passed away,” she said, “ but there is thunder and fire coming—Morison, this is a fearful night to come trysting in ;” she closed the casement as she spoke,

but listened, as if she dreaded the coming of some one.

“No one can enter love, for I know the use of a bolt—and should your mother come—”

“O, I’ll manage my mother,” said Mattie, respiring as if a hundred weight had been lifted from her heart.

They sat looking on each other for a little space; Morison spoke first. “Mattie,” he said, with hesitation, “I know it is a custom with the young women of this and other valleys to hold tryste with various lovers; some, that they may have the pleasure of reckoning a dozen in their train, and others, that they may weigh the worth of each, and make a choice amongst them.”

“O, yes;” replied Mattie, with a smile, “there’s Bessie Howatson, she counts nae less than a score, and had them all round her supper table at once. There’s Tibbie Freysel has nineteen lads, and ane they ca’ the chaser, who follows her wherever she goes. As for me, I maun make two or three do—it’s no every ane that the heiress of Fourmerkland will draw up wi’!” and she gave her head a prideful toss, and looked on Morison as if not quite sure of the propriety of making him one of the elect.

"So, then," said Morison, with a smile, "I am afraid I have deprived you of one whom you wished to see—thrust myself unwittingly upon an honour not designed for me—two came to the door, but only one got in."

Mattie hardly knew how to take this; but soon made up her mind. "Weel now, ye are mair than the deevil they call ye; ye not only come on the night that ye shouldna, but ye fley awa some poor admirer who came to make a survey of the house by moonlight, number the windows, draw a circle round the place that holds his treasure, and dream of what he couldna obtain. I find I maun make ye dree penance. Hout! that's nae penance, unless my lips were as hard as auld Nanse Halberson's."

"I am afraid," said Morison, "that I have done a worse turn, than scare away a penniless lover; his saddle-horse and silver mountings, Mattie, such as glitter in lasses' een, betokened a wealthy wooer."

"Na, na," said Mattie, "the lad ye allude to is na sae easily scared; and bold as ye are, and accustomed to domineer, and willing with baith tongue and hand, ye wadna be so rash as to venture a tousle wi' him;" and she tossed her head, snuffed the air, and shifted on her seat,

loosening Morison's arm, which by this time encircled her waist, and pushing him from her, looked on him at arm's length.

"Women only judge of matters as they wish them," said Morison, "and it's natural enough for you to think a lover a hero; but let that pass—he that has got a fine horse and a servant, though he has two or three miles to ride, may bear a small disappointment; it would have been a more painful thing for me, Mattie, had I walked three rough miles in vain. But I am on the right side of the door, and the lad of the blood-horse and silver bridle, is on the wrong; so let me be thankful, and make the most of my time, before Mattie Anderson recovers from her surprise of giving audience to the wrong ambassador of the little demon, whom Dominie Milligan calls Dan Cupid."

"And what wad Roger say, an' he could speak?" questioned the damsel, in the words of Ramsay; "if ye feel as ye say, why be thankful; I did wrong in carrying away the warm supper, which I had so painfully prepared; are ye the lover in the old song?—

" And never a blythe styme wad he blink,
Until his wame was fou."

“Why then, Mattie, I would say that one real lover is worth half a dozen coming and going ones, with Tibbie Freysel’s chaser to boot:—and more, that such indulgences, though innocent enough, give a character of lightness and lack of feeling to those who permit them; and further still, that those only who love one, can hope to be warmly loved in return.”

“Weel spoken, Dominie Roldan,” said Mattie, “and it’s just for that ae real true love that I am seeking; I will pass the lads of the district, such as I think likely and weel connected, before me, and when I see ane that suits, I’ll just do as the gudewife of Fairyknowe does, when she seeks a servant lass,—grip him by the haffet lock, as my father catches a filly, and cry ‘Lad will ye marry?’ Ye see I am not without a plan.”

“Well, Mattie, you are a strange creature, and I suppose I must e’en act in your own spirit—I must look out for a bright eye here, a rosie cheek there; find a witty tongue east, a handsome foot west, and passing them before me proceed to select, in the hope that one like Mattie Anderson, uniting all those qualities, may cast up, on whose love-locks I can lay my hand, and say, ‘Will ye be my wife?’”

“There now,” said Mattie, “ye speak and act

like one of this world; only ye needna have smacked sae hard; however ye canna ken every thing at first. But what's this now, what's this now? The whole sky seems on fire, and there's thunder! Morison, we'll have my mither here; she never can rest when there's fire in the air; and the first place she comes to is my chamber —what will be done?" While she was speaking, one broad bright flash of lightning gushed from east to west, lingered at the window for a moment, throwing a ghastly glance on all that was living or dead, and ere it was well gone, a clap of thunder succeeded, long and loud, which shook the ground, and made the plates tremble on their shelves. The wind rose, and rain came with it, but the lightning did not slacken, nor the thunder demit. "She's coming, she's coming!" said Mattie. "Now Morison sit still, and for the heart of ye utter not a word, or even look round."— She extinguished the candle as she whispered this, and seating herself by his side, unloosened her hair, and throwing a fleece of ringlets over him, which reached to his knees, and through which no one could distinguish a feature, awaited the coming of her mother.

As Pennie Hudlestane approached she was heard to say, "This is an awful night for the un-

folded nowte, and the poor sheep on Rowantree-rigg and Moorwhairn. If it be thy will, spare our gear, and haud thy hand about our biggin—no for my sake, nor yet for my gudeman's, but for that of our poor bairn, Mattie, wha has na the strength to bide the bensel of poverty, and is owre simple to take care of the needful." At every other word her mother uttered, Mattie gave Morison a nip or a squeeze; the door opened cautiously, and Pennie entered, saying, "Are ye sleeping, Mattie Anderson? Hout, tout, what's this, and wha's this? here's a sight for a mither's ee, and on sic a night too! Wha can have come to see ye, lassie, when the fire is let loose, and the burns are louping down the hills like a hundred lambs on a bright May morning?" Mattie said nothing, but looked round on her mother, and held up her hand. Pennie lingered for a minute or so; at last she retired, murmuring, as she went, "Yere an odd lassie, and can waur baith yere father and me in maist things where sharpness is wanted. I dinna think the better, though, of a lad who could come out in sic a night; it's baith a tempting of Providence, and injurious to his claes—his Sunday finery will have got a sappling!"

"There now," said Mattie, "ye hear what my

mother thinks of your sense in coming out with thunder and rain for your companions—wearing yere Sunday claes too ! But ye are wearing my claes the now Morison, and while I have ye under my happing o' hair, which ye may imagine a silk mantle if ye like, let us have our ain whitter before I release you. There, now, your face is out—the colour of my hair becomes ye unco weel."

" Ye're an odd lassie, as your mother said," replied Morison ; " but now that she is gone, and we have only the lightning to look upon us, will ye tell me, Mattie, what I shall do to be worthy of your love? how to toil from morn to eve ; how to study and to dream how I may best achieve a name that shall place me within reach of this white hand of thine, when it is stretched out to make a choice among the young men of the land."

" There's sense in these words, Morison," said Mattie, " though they are a little highflown ; but yere fortune's made as it were, your bread is baked, and your water sure, and all that I have to do is to tell ane, twa, three ; aye, just three of what ye call the youth of the land that Mattie Anderson's bespoke, and Fourmerkland's out of the matrimonial market."

His arm, which had been withdrawn on

Pennie's approach, had regained its position round the waist: her left hand was in his right: their faces were so close that their breaths mingled, and they felt the beating of each other's hearts; it was a moment of inexpressible delight to one so enthusiastic as Morison: but with Mattie all was calm, considerate, nay calculating; she was none of those who are surprised by passionate emotion, or carried away by rapturous impulses. "Mattie," said her lover, "this is the first hour of my happiness; the world has hitherto looked cold and wintry upon me; the proud ones of a house I shall never more name have forgotten me, and left me to die like an unfledged bird tossed out of its nest by the wind; but the coldness of the world, and the scorn of the titled I can now endure, nay, meet with a smile—for Mattie Anderson has taught me that gentle spirits abide on earth."

"Are ye gaun daft, Morison?" said Mattie, "it wad be mair to the purpose if ye would give me some notion of the annual value of Howeboddom; Jeanie Rabson and James are gaye kind fowk, but they are as close as a nut, and as silent anent their affairs as a pound of butter is about the hawket cow it came from—but I can guess—the ground is worth a bonnie yearly pennie. Let me

see: — there's the forty-acre field, called the Fleucharpark; the thirty acre ditto, called Mitchelcrook; the five-and-forty ditto, named Culbertharris; the Reedhowm, twenty acre gude —all arable land—bearing capital wheat, and lying kindly to the sun. Then, there's of pasture as much as enables the laird to send two thousand lambs to Lockerby fair, and sell of butter, and cheese, and wool, and black cattle, more than my arithmetic can reach. If it's worth a bawbee, Howeboddom is worth sax hundred pound per annum, after the harrows have cleared the teeth—no a penny less. It's a bonnie down-sitting."

Morison, who regarded the praise of those he esteemed as a polite way of paying attention to himself, cordially concurred in all that Mattie said, but added that he had never heard one word about the annual worth of the lairdship; nay, he did not even know the various plough-worthy fields, with the names and measurements of which his companion seemed so well acquainted. "Morison," said Mattie, "ye are owre meikle in the clouds—ye mauna aye be ballad-making, it winna do—and if it does at all, it will be because ye may have the good fortune to get a

wife who will render thought on your part less necessary. Will sangs as lang as Robin Hood, think ye, stock the howes and knowes whilk will come into your possession? It wasna by repeating Chevy Chase, and blads of Willie Wallace, or scenes out of that liefu'like book, the Gentle Shepherd, that my father stocked Fourmerkland, and made his daughter an heiress."

" Mattie," said Morison, " the thistle bears no roses, and ye cannot gather geans from the bramble; I have grown up with no better adviser than my own beloved mother, whose sense of wrongs has imbibited her life, and thrown a shade over mine. I am therefore stiff and self-willed; books, both in prose and verse, have been for many a year almost my sole companions, and I have not yet found better—at least not till within this hour."

" There now, ye are at yere compliments again!" exclaimed Mattie, with some impatience of manner; " have I not told ye that ye canna draw the black clout o'er my ee with yere fine sayings? I wadna gie half a dozen real facts for a speech that wad gae round Glengarnock. It seems unaccountable to me that ye ken nae mair about Howeboddom than ye do about the moon; and less, I do believe—for I have seen ye glower at

her for a full hour, as if she were fit for pasturage, and ye were portioning her into grass-parks."

"It seems strange to me, now Mattie," that you should demand this knowledge of Howeboddom at my hand; but I can guess—ye have included the laird in your calculations, and wish to weigh him in the balance: he is a rich man, and little the worse of the wear."

"Deed no, Morison," replied she; "not that I dinna think James Rabson a worthy man, and companion meet for any man's daughter in the district; but his heart has na been at hame for these aughteen years and mair. Thousands have seen him as well as me; he climbs the Whinnie-hill ilka Sunday afternoon, be't summer or winter, and sits among the gowans ae time, and stands in the snaw anither, looking towards the Elfin-glen. I ance had the curiosity to steal to the hill-top to see what I could see. I saw you first, Morison, there ye were on the pinnacle of the rock whilk overlooks the Elfin-cavern, for ye aye liked to be on the tap o' a' things; and there was yere mother amang the honeysuckles of the entrance, motioning you down from the dizzy height. I soon found what James Rabson was looking for." A truth never present to Morison's mind before, was stamped on it now; in a moment's space he had

collected a score of circumstances, and connected them all with the affection for his mother which the words of Mattie Anderson had intimated.

“ I feel and see,” said Mattie, “ that ye are of the same opinion with the whole country side ; and that accounts for his uncommon wark about you, Morison, and his resolution to make you laird of Howeboddom.”

“ Make me laird of Howeboddom ! ” exclaimed Morison, with great and undissembled astonishment ; “ Mattie—Mattie, I entreat you not to make my feelings your sport in this manner—you are a strange girl ; but if ye love me, let me hear no more of this.”

“ Hear no more of this an I love you ! And wherefore no ? ”

“ Because,” said Morison, “ such a thing has never even been dreamed of : ye warned me against dreaming, Mattie ; take the counsel to yourself.”

“ I can read the dream in a moment,” said the maiden. “ If I am dreaming, I am no deaf : did not James Rabson, afore a score of folk, last Hallowmass-eve, declare you heir of Howeboddom ? I have reason gude for remembering it, for something was said by my mither or myself in your dispraise, when James crested up, and tauld us

plainly that the laird of Howeboddom—and ye should be that—was a match and mair for the heiress of Fourmerkland ony year, from Beltane to Beltane; and so it is—and because it is—”

“And because it is,” he exclaimed, “the bastard boy of Mary Morison, who was so lately scorned and mocked, is admitted to woo the young heiress of Fourmerkland ! is that your meaning, Mattie ?”

“Indeed, lad,” said the maiden, with great composure, “ye maun consider that Morison Roldan, baseborn though he be, has the bitterness of his descent bonnily sweetened, and made fit for ony lips to swallow, when he comes as the young laird of Howeboddom. What wad the warld hae said o’ me, think ye, if I had allowed myself to fa’ in love with ane that had nougnt but twa goose feathers and a whittle, as the daft sang says ; they wad have tossed their noses, and said, the heiress of Fourmerkland had made a bonnie hand of herself, wha wad have thought it !”

“I see it all, now,” said Morison ; “you have accounted well for the sudden sunshine of your own looks, and for the encouraging nods and

winks of your father and your mother. Mattie, you have known me long, will you believe what I say?"

"I have known you," said Mattie, "since you were ten years old; all the lass-weans at the school kenned ye as weel as me; mony a time I have heard them cry, 'It's as true as if Morison Roldan himself said it?'"

"Well, then," said Morison, "as sure as that flash which now passed the window, belongs to heaven, so sure will I not be laird of Howebodom, even were it pressed upon me. I have not another word to say on the subject;—and now, I suppose, I may go home?"

The heiress seemed to shrink in Morison's arms—it was a minute or two before she spoke. "It's no," said she, "that I object to your independent feeling: independence is a bonnie word; but what I dislike is the folly of casting yere fortune away; that is the queerest, oddest, daftest, thing I ever heard of ye; and ye ken yere ways are not those of wisdom. If a casket of minted gowd were to drap at yere foot frae the moon, Mr. Independence would give it a kick, and cry on Consideration, to come and pick it up!" She withdrew half an armful of her

hair from his shoulders and began to twine and twist it around her fingers, coiling it up, and then letting it loose again ; she wist not well what to say or do.

Morison came to her aid. "That the laird of Howeboddom," he said, "and his sister Jeanie should be so unkind to their own kindred, as to give their possessions to a stranger, I can believe, for their hearts run before their heads, and they have long loved me with a rising affection ; but because they are weak, am I to be wicked ? There are families in the vale who inherit their blood, to such should their lands be left, and not to one who will as surely refuse them, as he now withdraws his arm from the waist of Mattie Anderson."

What answer Mattie would have made to this, may be guessed. The door burst open, and her mother entered the room, exclaiming, "Have I held out my hand to a dreamer and a fool ? If ye winna allow yersel to be the heir of Howeboddom, what has brought ye to the honest sponsible house of Fourmerkland ?—Swith awa wi'!—take the road—the rain will cool ye ; a lad whose head's sae het as to scorn his fortune, stands in need of the interposition of heaven in

the shape of rain ; make yersel scarce, I say—
Mary Morison's bastard boy, shall never be
allowed to darken our doors again."

"O, mither!" said Mattie, " who could
have thought that so bright a beginning would
have had sae black a hinderend ? I aye said there
was something wrang about him, but wha wad
hae jaloused he would hae gane sae far wrang as
this ? and this is no the warst on't ; I doubt I
have offended young laird Skimming, of the
Bogrie ; he was to have come and seen me on
his new blood-horse, with silver bits in the bridle,
nae less, and instead of him wha should slip in
but Morison there !"

"Aye, that's warst of a', Mattie ; but ye did
for the best, ye did for the best," said Pennie.

Morison looked on Mattie, then on her mother :
he could scarce forbear laughing outright at the
ludicrous distress visible in both their faces.
" And what's more," he said, following up
the train of lamentation, " I doubt that the
young laird has suffered what he will like worse
than a wetting, or a disappointment in love : he
will for a while curse my hands and the scroggie
thorns of the Fourmerkland ; only tell him not
to say any thing uncivil of me, lest when we for-
gather next, we shouldna part sae easy."

“ Away wi’ ye ! I say,” exclaimed the mother.

“ The door stands open,” said the daughter.

“ And I tell ye, young man,” said the father, roused, and joining them, “ sic a shame has na been offered to my house, since the tapmost stane was laid. I have heard it a’—ye’re a born fool ! a born fool !—To come on the wrang side of the blanket’s nougat ; but to kick away fortune like a blinman’s ba’ and having done sae to presume to talk of love to my wean, my dutifu’ wean—my example of a wean.—But the door stands open —that was weel said, Mattie Anderson—ye ken the way hame—make yersel scarce.”

“ There ye stand, three of ye, whom the world cannot match for selfishness,” said Morison—there ye stand, Pounds, Shillings, and Pence ; personifications of the rule of three and barter. Ye cannot conceive how low and how mean I think you ; with what pity I look down upon you ;—but farewell—Morison, the bastard boy, will live to show you, that he was honouring you by this visit.” He took a step or two towards the door, then looking back, said with a smile—“ I have not refused to be laird of Howeboddom yet, Mattie—James Rabson has a prevailing way with him ;—and Jeanie, my ain Jeanie, is also

persuasive ; I have nae wish to break their hearts and say nay to six hundred a-year gude !”

He vanished as he said this, and Pennie Hudlestane exclaimed, “ That’s a queer lad, and I doubt he’s a deep ane—we have been owre hasty, it’s like !”

to escape the old man in the
seats of honour and of the
throne, the king above all
with all his
whole world.

CHAPTER X.

Here wealth still swells the golden tide,
As busy Trade his labour plies.

BURNS.

THE storm had ceased, the lightnings were withdrawn, and the streams suddenly aroused and as suddenly appeased, had subsided and offered no obstruction to Morison as he hastened from the Fourmerkland to the Elfin-glen. As he recalled the events of the night, he could not help remarking the obstacles which chance had thrown in the way of his late journey, nor do we mean to say that he was free from a superstitious feeling as he mused on them. But what touched him most was the scorn heaped on him by father, mother, and daughter. The baseness of his birth was a serpent by which, he began now to perceive more strongly, he should in future be stung ; nor did he see any escape from a reproach, which, though expressed only by the vulgar, influenced

the learned and the highminded. A thousand times as he revolved all reasonable schemes of ambition, did he wish he had belonged to those stirring times when brave deeds wiped out all stain of birth, and when it was thought no dis-honour to be called bastard. He was now growing strong and active ; he was without fear ; his presence of mind was fit for every emergency ; and he felt that indescribable swelling of soul which is only known to minds created for great achievements of mind or body. He lay down, scarcely fatigued for all he had undergone, and fell asleep and dreamed of battle-fields, victory spreading her wings over him ; and of honours earned by bravery and by genius.

He lay far into the morning, and when he awoke he found the sunlight on his face and his mother's voice in his ear. " Morison, for shame ! the blessed sun himself reproaches ye—sluggard ! will ye lie all day ? Have ye forgotten that a voice has gone through the vale, signifying that a great preacher—a holy one—has come into the land, and that to-day, at noon, he will speak to the people on the wrath to come. I put small faith in freets ; but who will tell me that the thunder, and the fire, and the rain were here yestreen for nought ? and hasna

that douce, but something cracked man, Sandie Peden as gude as prophesied, that the French wi' their swords and spears, will stand afore lang, as thick in Galloway as stubble in a new-shorn field?—Up, therefore, my man, and see that ye bring away something mair nor the text."

Morison now remembered that a sermon upon "The coming Woe"—such were the words—had been promised, and rose wondering what sort of sermon it might be.

On his way to the entrance of the Elfin-glen, he perceived at a distance, close by an old fortalice that commanded the path, a crowd of people collected and more gathering. The first person that greeted him was Nickie Neevison. "Ye're a fine lad! I have a crow to pouk wi' you; you a scholar and a student to be, and fit to hae yere mouth opened, to allow a wandering parson to come to yere door-stane and take the word of God out of your mouth, and the bread frae atween yere teeth."

The greeting of John Milligan was of another sort. "Ye are well come, Morison Roldan; this day ye will see the corn-fan applied to the chaff; this day will ye hear the thunder, and see the live lightnings of the Word. Ye have sometimes thought that my Saturday's prayers on the skaling

of the school had unction in them—he with the true unction is here at last. O Morison, terrible times, terrible times are coming, of which my friend sees the shadow ! But here he comes—ye will hear more anon.”

The person thus announced was the preacher, to hear whose sermon on “ The coming Woe ” the people were assembled. He was a tall man, with a fine—nay, a noble, but wild character of face ; his hair was long and matted ; he wore a long dark cloak, carried his hat and his bible in his hand, and bowed right and left, saying, “ Bless ye, bless ye,” as he took his station on a fragment of the tower round which his hearers were crowding. While Morison was endeavouring to recollect his face, the preacher held out his hands east and west, and north and south, and exclaimed : “ All ye that are worldly, and selfish, and griping—with souls fit for a gimlet bore—who are hard of heart, seared of conscience, and who love not Scotland as the fragrant breast of your mother—begone ! depart !—ye are of the nether millstone breed, and I may as well stick my staff in the ground and water it, with the hope of its producing garlands, as preach of ‘ The coming Woe ’ to you.”

“ Preserve me !” said Nickie Neevison, “ what

a Saint John in the wilderness sort of look!—his sermon will be a thistly ane."

When the audience became composed, the preacher intimated his text in the words of Ezekiel. "Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth, by the living creatures, with his four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel. As for their rings they were so high that they were dreadful, and their rings were full of eyes round about them four. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them, for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels." He read these words twice with an audible voice, and then exclaimed, "Who can explain this dread vision? Who can expound the terrible mystery of the wheel within a wheel endowed with eyes and with living life? Can you shepherds of the hills, who tend flocks and eat food with a tarred finger? Can you husbandmen of the vale, who sow and reap, and are given to slumbering in the kirk? Can you children of the sea, who dwell on troubled waters, and are neither in heaven nor in earth but in a continual state of fear and tribula-

tion? You are all dumb: and why are you dumb?—yea because you are blind. And why are you blind? because ye love the delights of life and would not quit the fleshpots of Egypt for a day to be indulged with a view of paradise with angels laying their white bosoms over their harps."

"I wish he would come to the 'Woe of the Wheels,'" said Adam Wilson the miller, "I jalouse he wants a cog, and that his gudgeons are wrang."

"Now," continued the preacher, "I see you stretch out the neck, and look east and west and north and south, to see from whence 'the coming woe' can come. But the coming woe is unlike other woes. The spear has come against you, and so has the ball; you have had the fires of the Romish church kindled around you: yea, the Lutheran church put your thumbs in screws of steel, and wrenched your joints asunder; the winds of heaven wafted the fleets of your enemies against you; sore famine came upon you, and civil war was here with all its horrors. Yet all these were but passing evils—the coming woe is a permanent one, and will waste you more than the famine, destroy you more than the sword, pinch you worse than the

steel boot and thumb-screw, and be more terrible than the fires of the Romish church."

"It maun be the moor ill amang our ewes," muttered a shepherd ; "I have ay dreaded something would happen since they crossed the Cheviot with the Spanish."

"I have nae doubt," whispered a gardener, "that 'the coming woe' is a new kind of locust of the caterpillar breed—there winna be a green leaf left in the land."

"I'll go to sea in an old wife's shoe," said a sailor, "if he don't mean the white worm and the dry rot in timber,—farewell to the wet sheet, the full sea, and the piping wind."

"Since we cannot see 'the coming woe,'" continued the preacher, "through the dull dim eyes of the people of this land, let us look at it by the pure light of scripture. The vision, which appeared unto the prophet, was of a wheel within a wheel, and every one had four faces ; the first face was the face of a cherub, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle. Now what followed this dread vision ? There followed woe, woe to Israel—the sword was upon them, and the chariot and the hand of the armed

man, and nothing but a remnant of the people was spared. All this is typical—it is a scriptural shadowing forth of things to happen in these our latter days. The wheel within a wheel, my people, is that wondrous invention, called Machinery ; wood, and iron, and brass, are performing the work of flesh and blood ; and we behold linen woven, broad-cloth made, and cotton manufactured, with a rapidity which men call magical, but I call demoniac. Look upon that marvellous engine, my people, is there not wheel within wheel ? does it not seem moved as with a living spirit ? yea, doth not that hot and devilish power, called steam, keep it in perpetual motion, and enable it to perform its prodigies ? I say, then, my friends, that the vision of the wheel within a wheel, seen by the river of Chebar, was plainly typical of machinery moved by steam."

" Na, but the like of that now," said a peasant ; " this is the man for wringing a clear meaning out of a dubious text."

" There's the true root of the matter in him," said Johnnie Spulepin, the weaver ; " I have na had half the work frae Paisley since ' the coming woe' of machinery came."

" I'm dubious that he is na rightly grounded

in scripture," muttered a man from a neighbouringborough; "cotton's dirt cheap, and linen may be had for an auld sang since spinning-jennies were invented, and machinery came in."

"Now, my people, the four faces are typical of the character of 'the coming woe' to man. The first face was the face of a cherub. Mark that! Invention has come with smiles and sweetness, and with an aspect of heaven, to persuade us to adopt it—to put the helve to the hatchet that is to cut down the whole forest. The second face was the face of a man. Mark that also. This was to persuade us that the wheel within a wheel—'the coming woe' was for the use and advantage of man: that it would lighten his toil; enable him to wipe his brow, and rest him; and that it was a most humane thing, and would make man as a god on earth. The third face—and now comes the woe!—the third face was the face of a lion. What—the gentle cherub, and man—the noble and the good, are become a ravening lion, whose teeth and claws rend and devour! This intimates that to all but him to whom the machine belongs, it will be as a ravening lion, devouring their substance, and drinking their blood. And the fourth was the face of an eagle. O, my brethren, this comes home! This is so

plain that a child may understand it. It is typical of two things: first, that machinery will, as with an eagle's wing, fly to the uttermost ends of the earth; and thirdly, that, as with an eagle's beak and claw, it will seize and rend all lower things: and thus will machinery—‘the coming woe’—be king of the earth.”

“ His presence be about us!” said a farmer! “ If machinery will plough and sow, and send spring and summer—O for a new nineteen years’ lease of Knockhoolie!”

“ Now, my people,” said the preacher, “ first we instance, then apply. Mine are no vain or visionary fears. In the first place, the prophet hath told us, that what followed were lamentations, and weeping, and mourning; and in the second place, I will interpret and explain ‘the coming woe;’ and show you the evils which will result from an invention more destructive to man than that of gunpowder. Certain men have seized on the whole earth as their inheritance, and certain men have possessed themselves of all the gold and silver thereof. To the former belongs agriculture; to the latter, machinery. Now, the former are compelled to employ men to plough, and sow, and reap; nor can they have more than one crop in the year, for such is the will of God. The latter

have got machines made with such skill and cunning, that they can card, and spin, and weave, and bleach, with little help from man ; they put on the steam, and set the wheel within a wheel a-going, and coin gold and silver as in a mint. Behold, therefore, my people, the woe and the desolation about to come upon you. All ye who live by skill, and are cunning in the arts of spinning and weaving, and in the manufacture of tools of brass and iron, put on sackcloth and strew ashes on your heads. The time will come when a fourth of the people of this land will want bread because of 'the coming woe'—for machinery works but for the rich. Therefore I say that he who invented spinning and weaving machines should be stoned ; and he who invented steam-engines should be hanged by the neck till he be dead, nor should the Lord show mercy to his soul."

" May the devil burn yours, you canting rascal!" exclaimed a man indignantly, making his way through the crowd up to the preacher ; " may the devil burn yours, you canting rascal ? Will you attempt to preach down innocent useful machinery, when there are so many sins and enormities in the land to turn your sermons against ? You have taken up the vulgar hue and cry against a humane and benevolent invention ; your narrow

soul will not permit you to comprehend the breadth and splendour of what you exclaim against ; you shut your eyes to the millions—yea, millions which this invention will thrust into the pockets of the government, and thereby enable them to wage wars and conquer countries, and so extend the reign of knowledge, science, and philosophy over the habitable globe."

"Thou art but a rude person," said the preacher, "to thrust thyself into this matter ; thou and I can never agree. Thou art one who estimates human happiness by the money which goes into the government's pocket : I estimate it by the condition, the social condition of the people ; by the numbers of well fed, well clad, and well instructed men and women and children. I tell thee this machinery which thou callest humane, is an aristocrat and a tyrant ; it throws, and will throw thousands, tens of thousands, and hundreds of thousands, out of employment ; but because there are more yards of calico made, and more money put into the pocket, thou wilt not inquire what hands made them, nor into how many pockets the money went. I tell thee that if the men of this generation saw with my eyes, and felt the wheel within a wheel, as I do, they would arise in one indignant

mass and crush your machinery with stones and consume your mills with fire. I have said my say :—in another district shall I explain to man ‘the coming woe,’ and lift up my voice as I have done here, for the benefit of benighted mankind.—Farewell.”

“ Not so fast, not quite so fast, my friend,” said the person who had interrupted him—a stout, bandy, bow-legged man, with a face strewn with small pearls on a purple ground, and an eye, whose fire still prevailed against the surrounding fat in which it was set, like a small wick burning in a cupful of grease. “ Not so fast my friend,” said Hugh Heddles, Esquire, a stranger, who had purchased a small farm, through which the Elfin-burn ran, after freeing itself from Mary Morison’s glen, and on the side of which the old tower rose, among the ruins of which the preacher had delivered the sermon on the coming woe. “ Not so fast; you have uttered punishable words, and I accuse you of stirring up the people to crush my machinery, and burn my mill with fire;” so saying, he stretched out his hand to seize him.

“ Lo! man,” said he, “ where is thy machinery, and where is thy mill? they are but in thy imagination; there is not a mill in all this land,

save that of Adam Wilson, which grindeth oats and barley—I preached against ‘the coming woe.’”

A loud laugh from all the people around disconcerted Hugh Heddles, Esquire, and one of the hearers—it was James Rabson of Howeboddom, said, “The man against whom your hand is lifted is one distraught—a scholar, whom too much learning hath made mad—therefore harm him not—I will answer for his appearance in any court in the land.

“He may be mad,” said Hugh Heddles, “but he speaks damned coherently, and sarcastically; but as I have not built my mill it cannot be in danger of fire—so let him go.”

“Let him go!” exclaimed Nickie Neevison, with great contempt; “d’ye think ye could hae hadden him? My certie, man, he would have been as the lion, and I as the eagle, in the vision upon ye; he wad have taen his teeth and I my claws; we never allow preachers of God’s word to be haurled away like malefactors. But I’m saying yere no gaun to make a kirk and a mill on this bonnie burnside, to set up yere wheel within a wheel in? My conscience! the bonnie stream itself, would na consent to sic profanation.”

“I shall make the experiment, however, and

that soon," said the new proprietor, and away he walked;—the meeting, late so stormy, became quiet, and the people sought their homes, discussing, as they went, the merits of the sermon on "The coming Woe."

When Morison returned to the Elfin-cottage, he was accompanied by Jeanie Rabson—the laird had looked wistfully up the glen, but shook his head and went home. "Weel, my bairn," said Mary, "ye see what a servant of the Most High can do; he moved some of the stocks and stones of this valley, that never moved before, O, my man, his ministry is the highest of all ministry. But sit down, Jeanie Rabson, and tell me what the sermon was about, and where the text lay."

When this was explained, she held up her hands, and said, "Ah, a grand subject! a wheel within a wheel! I remember ance douce Mr. Macknight, whom scoffers ca' Sleepy Samuel, tried his hand on it in Glengarnock kirk, and we lost him amang the machinery."

"O but," said Morison, with a smile, "our preacher to-day neither lost himself among the wheels, nor encouraged sleep. Except that the text had no connexion whatever with the present inventions in machinery, he was singularly clear,

vigorous, and pointed. Yet the man was mad."

"O, Morison, my bairn," said Mary, "ye are but a babe yet in the matter of gospel symbols; the less visible the connexion, the more beautiful and to be admired is the application. O, my bairn, read that glorious work, M'Ewen on 'The Types,' and see how that precious youth draws the sweet milk of Christian consolation from the yell and barren things of antiquity."

"I have," replied Morison, "and I consider him as much too ingenious; but yet the preacher, to-day, mad or wise, has opened my eyes on a wide field of speculation—the better text would have been, 'Man hath found out many inventions.'"

The voice of one singing, or rather chanting, was now heard. Jeanie Rabson exclaimed, "Here's Nickie Neevison coming in ane o' her grand turrivies—and wha's this wi' her? it's Dominie Milligan; let me take a peep in the glass, for my head's a fright—and wha's this wi' him again? Ou it's the new laird—him they ca' Esquire—pest on his name, I'll forget my ain soon—ou, Hugh Heddles, him that bought Larg-nane stream and tower at the grand roup at Edinburgh, and called it Heddle-hall."

In came the three, Nickie Neevison foremost, with many a beck and binge. "Now, Mary, woman," she said, "and you, Jeanie Rabson, ye kenna wha I have brought to see you? this is John Milligan, after whom the bairns cry Dominie, and whase look whan he gangs to bed and rises in the morning is directed to that pleasant place called Howebooddom. And this is Hughie Heddles, the second son of auld Heddles, the sacken-weaver of Duncow, whom folk called Thrums; and he calls himself malefacturer—a braw name. But he has been baptized this morning in the Elfin-burn by the name of 'The coming Woe,' and so The coming Woe shall be his name now and for evermore."

The Dominie sundry times held up his hand, saying, "Peace, woman, peace!" but the stream of Nickie's converse was as obstinate as a moorland burn in a thunder plump; at last he took advantage of a pause in her harangue and said, "Mary, whose name is Morison; this gentleman, whose baptismal name is Hugh, his surname Heddles—not malefacturer, as Nickie erringly, and I suspect, sneeringly says—is come to make a proposal which will, peradventure, be for your worldly advantage: he will explain his meaning unto you."

"Yes, Madam, said Hugh Heddles, Esq., of Heddle-hall; "I am come, as this good man justly says, to propose something which will be much for your worldly advantage. I am Heddles of the great firm of Heddles, Treddles, Warp, Waft, and Company, now proprietor of that portion of the soil called Largnane, through which runs a stream of great value and capability."

"I can answer for its value," said Nickie, "it's just half alive wi' bonnie burn trouts; and as for its capability, did ye ever see it when the windows of heaven were opened? Capable! my certie! it's capable of ony thing; if ye dinna build Heddle-hall as steeve as a tower, the burn will make a kirk and a mill on't!"

"Madam," continued Heddles, "I shall make this country into a perfect mint; spade guineas will be as plentiful as gowans in May; the weans will, instead of rowanberry beads, wear oriental pearls; your gowns shall be of silk; and for carts, ye shall all have chariots; for porridge, plum-pudding; and beef shall abound more than potatoes. Woman now a domestic slave, instead of spinning and knitting, and planting potatoes, and drudging even and morn, will sit on her carpets, and have spiced meats, and perfumed airs, and musical instruments

to play of their own accord. And yet all this cannot be achieved without I have the permission which I come to request."

"God guide us ! Mary woman, grant it," said Jeanie Rabson ; "it will make this little vale a paradise, and we wha dwell in it will be little lower than the angels."

"O grant it, Mary," said Nickie Neevison ; "it will do us a' gude ; I wad like to sit among artificial lilies, and hae the floor laid with crown-pieces on edge—but help us too, an' we are all ladies, where will we get servants frae ?"

"Your servants will be machinery," said Morison ; "a woman of timber and iron will spin your seventeen hundred linen ; a machine will help you on with your mantle ; a dish, of its own accord, will offer broth ; ye will be fed by a steam-engine ; and instead of yoking horses to ride to market, turn but a cock, and you distance the eagle."

"This youth," said Heddles, "has a very pretty notion of the thing. Know, then, that on the western bank of this stream the firm of Heddles, Treddles, Warp, Waft, and Company, will erect spinning and weaving mills, moved by that useful servant, water ; and where water fails, by that powerful auxiliary, fire. Man and woman

will be required to do nought but sit, look, and admire the fertile genius which created a power fit to work more than Michael Scott and all his devils, and drudge and sweat to more purpose than ten thousand Brownies."

"There's the wheel within a wheel, which poor deranged Willie of Starryheugh expounded," said Nickie Neevison. "He saw nought but evil in the invention; he had not the sense to observe that this son of Anak, called a machine, would work for us poor bodies. He thought, Heaven restore him! that it would toil only for the rich; but what could ye expect of a man avowedly daft? But gang on, sir: this story is delightful and wonderful."

"It will work for all in a philosophical sense," said Heddles. "Now, madam, you must aid in this good work—you must really become a benefactress to your country. I shall explain myself."

"Mary," whispered Nickie, "he wants ye to be lady of Haddle-hall—but, bless me! wherefore so white? I meant nae offence; besides, many a ane would loup at him, widdif' bodie though he be."

Heddles coughed and continued, "This glen

seems made on purpose: the stream is never dry, and the sides and bottom are of rock; so it is quite a natural trough or reservoir. Now, my good madam, we wish for your permission to put a dam across the mouth of the glen, just a stone throw above the house, so that we may have a command of the descent; we have had it surveyed and valued, and I am authorized to offer you seven pounds twelve shillings, and ninepence halfpenny per annum—quite a little fortune to one in your condition; and as I knew you would not refuse it, I had the lease drawn out, and here it is, ready for you to sign."

"Take it, Mary," said Nickie Nceivison; "what sairs sic a wilderness of a place? Take it, woman; the dam will drown the howlets, and drive out the hawks, and hinder the hawthorns frae sprouting, and aboon a' choke up the Elfin-cavern, whilk was but a rendezvous for gangrel bodies and wicked elves; ye maun let me get a plant of the lang sooping honeysuckle with the golden horns, that hings its garlands at the entrance; there's na sic a flower in a' Glen-garnock."

"Take it, Mary," said Jeanie Rabson; "the siller will do ye mair good than a' the howlets

that ever flew, the honeysuckles that ever grew—than a' the flowers that ever sprang, or a' the birds that ever sang."

"And take it," said the Dominie; "were it but to shut out the elfs and imps of darkness from a howf in the land, for of a surety the Elfin-cavern—"

"I'll see all the mills that were ever built on fire, and all the machinery that was ever made burnt, before the Elfin-glen shall be made into a mill-dam," exclaimed Morison! "Many an hour have I pulled wild flowers in the linn, and many an hour have I sat on my mother's knee while she was weeping in the Elfin-cave—I'll—"

"O dinna use anither rash word, my son," said his mother, with a brightening face; "the auld glen is endeared to us baith by mony recollections.—It mayna be."

"Ye kenna what ye are refusing, Mary," said Nickie Neevison. "Did ye no hear that Hugh Heddles's braw machines will work for our gude—that they are to toil to put money into our pockets?"

"In a philosophic sense, and according to the principles of national economy," said Hugh. "The money will not, indeed, come into your pockets at the first; but in obedience to the true principles of

commerce, it will come to you, even as the corn has to be committed to the ground before it can spring up in the ear and come to the sack."

"Hout, tout," said Nickie Neevison, "that will never do. Wad it no be wiser, think ye, to let it come into the pouches of the poor first? it could then in a philosophic sense, and in obedience to the true principles of commerce, take its own time in finding out the pockets of the rich. Unless my amendment is approved, I not only say the back of my hand be to your machinery, but I'll show you that unless it be for the good—not the philosophic good, but the real fill-belly and cleed-back advantage of the land, the thing shall only happen when the midden can loup owre the moon."

"There's nae use for a' this claver," said Jeanie Rabson; "we winna part wi' the glen, and that's enough. And, now that I think on't, my brother James wad rather gie twice the money than see the bonnie trout loups and the Fairy-cave filled up wi' water to move wabster's shuttles."

"Weel, weel," said Nickie, "I have said my say—Ise only add that, in the first place, ye may as weel bridle a whirlwind, as dam in the Elfin-burn; it will call on all its moorland-streams, and seek aid from the clouds, and down it will

come on your braw embankment like a spate on a snaw-wreath ; and, secondly, it's said in the auld prophecy, that nought that's made of stane and lime shall stand on the bank of the Elfin-burn except for the glory of God and the honour of the house of Roldan. Ye may build a kirk, Hugh Heddles, and the Roldans may build a castle ; but nae meaner thing can stand—I mind the words weel."

Hugh Heddles rose in something like wrath. "I am head of the firm," said he, "of Heddles, Treddles, Warp, Waft, and Company, and I am neither to be preached nor prophesied out of my resolution : the mills shall be built ; the machinery revolve ; and the land be enriched, in spite of madmen's sermons, and mad women's says."

Loud laughed Nickie, as Heddles withdrew. "It will gang hard wi' me an I havena some fun wi' this widdifu' knurle of a bodie, before he rears his mills and hings his machinery. If I could but persuade the burn to get up sic a spate as it did when Morison there was born, I could manage the rest."

The snows of winter fell and then melted, and the winds of spring blew, and, with the sun, brought the bud to the tree and the gowan

to the brae, yet nothing was heard of Hugh Heddles and his undertaking. But on the first morning of May fifty men, with spades and pick-axes, arrived on the banks of the Elfin-burn ; one portion began to make the channel straight, the other to pull down the old tower, for the purpose of raising mills in its place, while over the whole presided Hugh Heddles, with a junior member of the firm, who carried a roll of plans, which he loved to unfold whenever a doubt required solving. At first, the peasantry looked with curiosity on the plans, and on the change about to be effected on a stream which was a favourite, and on an old tower around which was hung the garland of many a tradition. One or two rather spake words of encouragement.

“ It’s weel may wared ! the burn’s a downright deevil of a burn ; it drowned Wattie Kennedy, of the Hietea, the only honest tinkler I ever kenned, and it swooped away twa ricks of as gude corn frae my cousin, as ever were wat wi’ water : bank it in and keep it in, say I.”

“ Aweel,” said another, “ that’s a gude turn to the country to pull down that auld dungeon of a tower, a howff for bats and vermin ; but, lads, when ye come to the vaults take care, ye’ll start a spirit ; the story runs that a man was murdered

there by ane of the rough auld Roldans. I canna say I ever saw aught myself, but mickle has been heard."

" We shall keep a watch to-night," said Heddles to his partner: " those who know not the value of our undertaking, in a philosophic point of view, may come and destroy the tools, and pull up the marks which we have made."

The men renewed their labours in the morning; nothing had been molested during the night, nor on the second evening did aught appear to alarm them. The watch was placed again on the third evening, and midnight was all but come, without any other sound than the gurgling of the stream, nor any other sight save a couple of owls that sailed round the vacant space where their tower of refuge lately stood, with many a melancholy hoo-hoo. Hugh Heddles himself had come from a distance to see that his two watchers did their duty; the moon was dipping now and then into the clouds, and throwing darksome shadows over the stream and the ruins; the waterfall in the Elfin-linn was heard through all the air; and now and then a rushing wind shook the trees, and raised up the dust of the cast-down tower.

" See that no one molests these marks, or

obliterates these lines," said Hugh. " The peasants are a malicious race, and I heard something like threats held out that elves, and such imaginary personages, would assert their right to their immemorial haunts, and do us an ill turn. I have lived in the world these fifty and odd years, and in all that time nothing has appeared to me worse than myself."

" Flint, fire, hell, and Hades ! " exclaimed a voice, hollow and fierce, " who has destroyed my bedchamber ? "

All the three turned round to see what this might be, when they beheld a grim figure, half naked, with matted locks, kindling eyes, and a huge pikestaff in its hand; seated on a portion of the tower, and not at all shunning observation, but courting notice; for, before they could exchange look or word with each other, he exclaimed again, in a fiercer mood than before, " Flint, fire, hell, and Hades ! who has destroyed my bedchamber ? "

" It's the spirit of the murdered man ! " said one of the watchers. " This comes of meddling with haunted towers ! " and off he bolted through the Elfin-burn, making the stream rise like a rainbow as he dashed across and made for the nearest house.

“ It’s the deevil himself ! ” muttered the other watcher. “ I ken him by his burning eyes, and the charking of his teeth.” And he followed his comrade with equal speed, but not with the like luck, for he ran towards a light on the other side of a deep morass, plunged out of one peat-hole into another, and at every plunge uttered a yell, for no doubt he believed that the evil spirit was following.

Hugh Heddles was left alone ; and it shall be said of him, that for a time he faced the enemy resolutely ; but his courage was beginning to give way when the figure uttering, for the third time, the cry of “ Flint, fire, hell, and Hades ! who has destroyed my bedchamber ? ” sprung forward, and bestowed upon the unfortunate manufacturer such a blow with his pikestaff as laid him senseless on the ground.

Hugh lay for some time before he recovered ; and when he did gather back his senses, he beheld the apparition standing grimly over him, with his pikestaff in the air : he therefore lay motionless, and it is likely he would have continued in that painful posture till the morning, had not a single horseman, with pistols at his belt and a sword glittering at his side, ridden up. The stranger reined in his horse, and ex-

claimed, "Hell and devil! who has dared to throw down the tower of my fathers?"

"I am gone now," thought Hugh to himself—"these spirits are both in a tale."

"Flint, fire, hell, and Hades!" cried he of the pikestaff, "who has destroyed my bed-chamber?"

"Hold!—madman, fool!" cried Lord Roldan—for it was he himself, on his way home from Italy—"hold! else by heaven I'll run you through." He sprung from his horse as he spoke, and holding his sword between the prostrate manufacturer and his foe, said "hold" to the one, and "rise" to the other.

Hugh, who imagined himself fairly in the hands of two evil spirits, who might quarrel about his carcass if he continued silent, but if he spoke would divide him, held his tongue; while the madman exclaimed, "Why do you guard him, my lord? Let me slay him in my wrath!" These were words of comfort. Hugh arose with not a few groans, but would not rise wholly.

"Who are you, sir?" said Lord Roldan, mildly: "and has this madman hurt you much?"

"Not much," replied Hugh; but before he

said more he looked at Lord Roldan's feet, and more anxiously at John's, and did not at all seem satisfied: he however said, in broken sentences, “I am Hugh Heddles, Esq., of the great firm of Heddles, Treddles, Warp, Waft, and Company, and this is my ground; and I have cast down the old bucklement of a tower, that I may build a mill for spinning and weaving, so that the people, in a philosophical sense, may be enriched.”

“God particularly confound the whole firm of Heddles, Treddles, Warp, Waft, and Company, and cast them and all their cursed reels and wheels into the lake of darkness!” exclaimed Lord Roldan, and then rode on.

Next morning the legend of the three watchers flew over the land with a dozen variations, and the whole countryside was convulsed with laughter.—“There has nae been sic an event in the land,” said Nickie Neevison, “since the day that Boston laid the Spedlans ghost. Od! I wad hae liked to have seen daft John Tamson, who sometimes slept in the auld tower, put daft about his bedchamber; and Lord Roldan, dafter still about demolishing the bigging—what rare fun!”

CHAPTER XI.

Her yellow hair, beyond compare,
Comes trinkling down her swanwhite neck,
And her two eyes, like stars in skies,
Wou'd save a sinking ship frae wreck.

BURNS.

ON the morrow the men of the firm of Heddles resumed their labours, but they resumed them with fears and tremors felt more than expressed; sundry of them, indeed, were natives of the south, and bowed their heads to other superstitions, but most of them were Scottish hinds, and all, to a man, nourished some spiritual or undefined dread of the other world, and had no desire to face any of its airy shapes before that grinning antic Death should regularly enrol them in his skeleton regiment. They wrought in groups; they talked of what had appeared last night, and of what had been seen and heard before. One shook his head and said, “Gude winna come on’t. There was Rab Steel, of Steelston—he wad dig up the

fairy ring on the braes of Barjarg—what is he now?—a poor demented creature wi' a powk and a staff!”

“ Ye needna gang sae far, neighbour, as Barjarg,” said a second—“ ye a' mind Tam Gunnion, the smuggler—right or wrang he wad take down the silver bell that hangs on the tapmost tower of Sweetheart Abbey. I was at the finding of his body; some say he missed a foot, and some say ane of the saunts clodded him down frae the summit, when his hand made the bell play ting—I winna say how that was—but this I ken, there was nae as much unbroken bane about him as would have made a baubee whistle.”

“ I mind freets and fears as little as ony body,” said a third, lifting a shovel, and shouldering a pickaxe, “ but I have got sic a pain in my back wi' stooping, that I’ll e’en slip awa hame and nurse myself by the fireside for a day or twa.” And he marched away accordingly. Others followed the example, and when Hugh Heddles, with a plaster applied where the pikestaff fell, came forth, he found that dismay had dispersed most of his people.

Hugh remonstrated. “ The great firm,” said he, “ of Heddles, Treddles, Warp, Waft, and Company, are not to be daunted by the ravings of

a daft man, or the cursings of a wild lord. A lord ! we will make a new race of lords ;—so go on, straighten the stream, root out the old tower.”

One demurred for reasons not strictly spiritual. “ So this is ane of the towers of the auld house of Roldan ; if I had thought that before, deil be in my fingers if I had moved a stane o’t—auld blude’s scarcer in this land than it was, and I dinna like a race of lords begot by machinery.”

“ New blude’s as gude as auld blude ony time, as the craw said to the black pudding,” exclaimed his companion, “ but hear ye me: the Lord Roldan, wha we a’ thought dieted on by worms, is come hame ; and no that I care for him twa clinks of my pick, but when he sees the tower of his fathers rooted out, he’ll shoot half a dozen of us, and then howre sea to the pope, get absolution, come back, and stick half a dozen more.” In spite, however, of these grumblings, the work went on ; the stream was walled in with stone on each side ; the old tower was rooted out, and on its site the mills for spinning and weaving, of Heddles, Treddles, Warp, Waft, and Company, began to appear above the ground, nay, to lift their heads over the thickets of holly and birch, with which the land was both adorned and encumbered.

Morison beheld all these changes with something of the carelessness of a young ardent mind, to which few traditional recollections cling, and which regards alterations that shake the heart of age as matters of no moment. He looked into the vista of futurity, and heeded less the scenes nigh at hand. The view was indeed, darksome ; like the pilgrim in the valley of dread, he saw fearful shapes, and was stunned with dread forebodings ; yet he continued to gaze, till the landscape brightened, and the shapes grew like that of the loathly lady, shapes of beauty, and the forebodings gave way to hope. He had already turned his thoughts to a foreign land : his mother's views respecting him he regarded as visionary ; as little did he like the idea of sitting down, as he saw James Rabson desired to place him—laird of Howebottom ; and if a thought connected with his native vale crossed his mind, it was one so wild and so hopeless that he never gave it utterance, but concealed it in his own bosom. It was this—he resolved, before he left the land, to seek an interview with Lord Roldan, and either induce him to do justice to his mother and wed her, or to renounce him as his son for ever. The idea was a wild one, for his father was as wilful as he was fierce, and many prejudices,

and some of them strong ones, required to be combated and overcome. Morison had, however, set his heart upon the attempt, and he nursed it in his bosom, and thought of it by day, and dreamed of it by night.

It must not be disguised that something which he regarded as supernatural urged him on to this. The intimation he had received, that, as one of the house of Roldan, his fate would be indicated by superhuman means, dwelt in his mind more strongly than he cared to acknowledge; and though he laughed at all tales either of witchcraft or goblinry, and was skilful in ridiculing them, his pride, his vanity, and his hope, together with a touch of the belief of the district, all united in inducing him to hold the tale true; and that a legend, worthy of mockery in others, would come to pass, and be explained for him. These feelings and beliefs gave a seriousness to his brow when alone: he became fond of lonely and savage places; the secluded nooks of the woods, the turret of the falcon-tower, the Elfin-cave, but more particularly the wild and caverned sea-shore, were to him as musing-places; and though he carried books with him, he looked at them less than he cast his eye on the boundless sea before him, and delighted to imagine his sail

spread in some hitherto undiscovered shore, or with pennon displayed and cannon flashing, treading the enemy's decks, sword in hand, and striking all down between stem and stern.

During his wanderings and his musings he had of late happened to meet casually with one who had the air of a stranger, and of the sea. This was a middle-aged man, of a vigorous and active figure ; dressed more like one of the land than of the wave ; of pleasant address, and of very varied information. Morison had first met with him on the banks of the Elfin-burn, where he was looking at the rising structures of the firm of Heddles, Treddles, Warp, Waft, and Company, and was conversing with Heddles himself on the imports and exports of other lands with an ease and a knowledge that showed he was intimate with such transactions. On meeting now with Morison among the caverned cliffs of Glengarnock, he addressed him with the ease of a person familiar with his name and history, nor did he seem disposed to conceal his own ; he was, he said, Dick Corsbane, captain of the Wildfire, a vessel which he pointed out in the bay. "There she lies," he said, "at the back of that blackguard sandbank, Robin-rigg ; as pretty a piece of workmanship as ever was hollowed out of oak ; trades to all

ports; can fight, too, on occasion; and carries forty as bold fellows as ever breasted the salt waves." He seemed to think he had said enough, and took a silver call from his pocket, and whistled; a little boat shot out of a neighbouring cove; and saying "Good morning," he stept down the cliff, and waved adieu as his boat went dancing over the dimpling water.

As Morison sauntered home he was accosted by Nanse Halberson. "This is maist the first day I have ventured out," she said, "for a sair illness fell on me all winter, and but for thy mother and thyself, Morison, and Jeanie Rabson, the auld witch-wife wad hae been put to sad shifts, and wi' a' her spells and charms might ablins have died for want. But it was better ordered, thanks to God, and my other three friends, I am weel now; and see, lad, what worthy Dick Corsbane has gien me for a fair wind to the Wildfire—tea, and rum, and spicery—my gude word gangs for something wi' the world yet."

"But, Nanse," said Morison, "do you mean to tell me that such a well-informed man, as Captain Corsbane, believes that ye can sell him such a commodity as a fair wind?"

"In troth do I, Morison;—ye may set it down

as scripture that all sailors, frae the admiral to the cabin-boy, are superstitious; and may be, though the captain disna just believe sae meikle as others of his mariners, he believes quite enough for me when he pays me in sic coin as this for my good will. But gude morning—when we next meet, and that will be soon—” here she whispered in his ear, “ I shall tell ye something about Richard Corsbane, that he wadna tell ye himself;” and away she went homewards, leaving Morison musing on her words.

There was something in the looks of Corsbane which Morison could as little love as define, but he resolved when next he foregathered with him to discourse more fully on all matters; and, as this sea worthy seemed to seek his company, he felt that his wish would soon be gratified. It happened, in the afternoon of the same day, that Morison directed his steps as usual to the sea-side, and ascending a cliff, on which formerly a small watch-tower stood, he observed the vessels in the bay were hung with streamers; on looking inland, he saw a flag displayed from the top of the castle of Roldan, and on the hills in the distance stood groups of people, all looking seaward. What this might mean he was not long left in conjecture, for his acquaintance, Cors-

bane, who seemed to haunt the rocks, was soon at his side, and informed him that it was in honour of Thomas Lord Roldan's return from foreign parts, for the vessel which bore him was expected in the bay during the coming tide.

“Lord Roldan himself returned sometime since,” continued the captain; “but though his mother loves him, he might make a crownpiece dinner all his other friends in the district; he has his good points notwithstanding; whatever he promises, be it for good or evil, he never forgets.”

“Then I see, sir,” said Morison, “that you are but partly acquainted with Lord Roldan; that he remembers his word I have too good cause to question, whether he will deny his word remains to be seen. But no more of him now—how has it happened that Lord Thomas has grown into favour? he was wed to a heretic?”

“Why blessed mother church separated him from his heretical spouse,” replied Captain Corsbane. “His wife looked east when he looked west, and has sailed, so rumour says, for Ethiopia, or the Holy Land, on a pilgrimage. She has a little too much moonlight in the upper story—too light in the rigging—you understand

me ; and proposes to revive the days of simplicity at the foot of Mount Ararat ! A pretty notion, but rather late for society just now ; she will meet with kittle customers on Mount Carmel —but that's her look out—she is devilish handsome, and knows what she is doing, and what other folk are doing too : she is acquainted with all the errors of Lord Roldan, aye, and is the keeper of some of his secrets, damme ! I have seen him almost on his knees to her about some dirty bit of paper on which the word "wife" was written. But what has Dick Corsbane to do with that ? She kept it, and that was enough : she'll plague him with it, sink me if she don't ! for she hates her husband's house as a dutiful lady should."

" I have heard of this before—but enough of the name," said Morison. " I would rather hear you say something of your own achievements in the world—in that pretty craft, with good fellows on board. you will now and then, I presume, meet with an adventure worthy of being related on land."

Corsbane darted a keen look on the querist, and then replied—" Aye ! we now and then meet with other matters than a snoring breeze and a good market ; and I can tell you, younker,

a pretty fellow who takes in right good will to the hollow oak, and remembers that money's a firm friend, however it is come by, soon becomes an earl—a sea-king, faith! and holds his court, damme! in the east or the west, with ladies of honour from all the winds of heaven, and of all the colours of the rainbow."

The captain paced to and fro while speaking, and seemed to imagine himself on the quarter-deck, with a foe in view, for his steps were short and quick, and his looks kindled.

"I have sometimes imagined," said Morison, "that a life of sea-adventure would suit me better than a life on land."

"Have you, younker? Then damme I honour you for it, and kiss your shoe-tie! You're a rarity in these latitudes! Here lads of spunk, with fire in their eye, and quick of hand and head, sit still and vegetate, by the powers! and think they do enough by marrying some moorland laird's daughter, with threescore of acres for a portion; and instead of doing noble deeds at sea, beget sons and daughters, which any dunderhead can do. I have no patience with such sweetmilk cheeseparings—I haven't, on my soul!"

"Now I suppose," inquired Morison, "that a

knowledge of navigation, some skill in steering, and a head and hand that can go any where and handle any thing, besides a certain intrepidity of soul, will be required of him who quits the back of a horse to become what the poets call ‘a dark rider of the wave?’”

The captain answered, “All that, and mayhap somewhat more. These fingers of thine are long and round, and will do for a cutlass hilt, if the fearless heart is there. But this is the chap that I love, damme! with a quick eye, an untroubled spirit, and a ready finger, it makes a man’s fortune in the free trade”—and he displayed a very handsome pistol, which had seen service, for there was a cut of a sabre across the barrel. “Hast any knowledge of a trinket such as that, younker?”

“Do you see yon sea-hawk on the cliff?” said Morison, “it seems some twenty paces off.” He snatched, as he spoke, a pistol from his own pocket, and firing, the hawk dropped dead into the water below.

Corsbane started, for the pistol flashed across his face: he sprung to his feet, seized Morison’s hand, wrung it hard, and said, “Your fortune’s made; you are just such a lad as we want. A man with a head as well as a hand is

now and then required when I am absent from Miss Wildfire: you shall be shipped the first fair wind—it's a bargain, damme ! ”

Morison calmly reloaded the pistol, showing at the same time that it had a companion, and said, “ We shall talk about that when we next meet: but here comes a fresh sail.”

“ You have an eye that's a match for that of the hawk which you shot, younker, if you see a ship between this and the coast of Ireland: but this will tell me.” On applying his glass, Corsbane exclaimed, “ Aye, you're right, and it's the right ship too: she comes with the tide, and what a press of sail she carries ! A sudden squall now would capsize her as it would a paper kite.” No sooner was the vessel of Lord Thomas des-cried, than it seemed as if hill and dale, and cliff and castle, had found the power of speech ; shout after shout arose, shot after shot was fired, and so impatient grew many of the people that they left the uplands and lined the landing-place in the bay where they knew the vessel must, if rightly navigated, come to an anchorage. Though the breeze blew into the bay, and the tide was rapidly coming, the vessel had not a little space to clear, as well as difficulties of navi-gation to deal with, before she reached a safe

haven. She had to turn the formidable sand-bar called Robin-rigg, which, stretching half across the bay, offered such resistance to the advancing swell; that the dash and break of the sea was heard by the spectators on the hills, while at the same time they observed the threatening line of foaming and broken water where so many ships had gone to pieces.

The vessel that bore the people's hopes seemed to come full upon this dangerous bar, but just when they least looked for it she turned the extreme point of Robin-rigg, and with her sails filled and a strong inland current, sailed fair up the middle of the bay; her decks were crowded with mariners, and there was waving of hats on board and of handkerchiefs on the hills. Lady Winifred caused her chair—her black chair of state—to be carried to the top of the castle, and there, with her two attendant maidens—the one more starched, and the other more rotund than when we last parted with them—sat looking on the bay—the banner of her house waving all the while above her. Lord Roldan stood behind her, not a word was uttered—but when the sand-bar, on which so many ships suffered was passed, she drew her breath more freely. Horses ready saddled and bridled stood below;

the servants filled the windows; nay, even the men who were at work for the firm of Heddles, Treddles, Warp, Waft, and Company, fairly set at nought all remonstrance, and quitting shovel and pickaxe, hammer and trowel, flew to the neighbouring hills, notwithstanding the professional remark of their employer—"Go, and a murrain to you, since you will go; but your hands will soon make other powers for me over which curiosity can never come; powers that care for no sights, and, unlike mere mortals, will work night as well as day, nor desire meat and drink, nor covet sleep, nor dream of a holiday."

But there was one among the assembled people who seemed untouched with the general joy; this was Nanse Halberson; she looked north and she looked south, and she looked east and she looked west, and was heard to mutter to herself, "I dinna like the looks of the sky ava—there's some terrible thing in the air; it's no rain, weel I wot, for there's no a cloud to yield it—I wish there were;—it's no fire I think, for there's nought of that written on yon copper-coloured sky;—come here and speak to me my bairn." This she addressed to Davie Gellock, who was mounted on a dead tree, and was gazing and

shouting with the foremost. Davie descended at once—for though he disobeyed Dominie Milligan, and was thrawart with every one save Morison whom he loved and admired, he dared not to dispute the order of Nanse, who could turn him, he said, into a brown colt, and ride him post to doomsday, wi' as mickle ease as she could make a soleless shoe into a copper-bottomed barge.

“ David,” said she, with a stern brow, “ dost thou know why I have chosen thee to be my messenger?”

“ No,” said Davie, not without an effort, and some trembling of the knees.

“ Then I'll tell thee. If I bid ony of the pluckless sumphs around me run to the castle and tell Lord Roldan, an he loves his brother to hasten to the bay with men and horses, and coils of rope, for he is in danger of perishing, they will stare at me, and mutter ‘witch,’ and promise to go, and yet abide—and so precious lives will be lost. But you are a lad of sense and spirit—and hark, in thine ear—neglect my bidding,” and she held up her finger,—“ I shall make a world's wonder of thee next halloween.”

Away started Davie, over knoll and through hollow, direct for the castle, but as he put ground

between Nanse and himself, his fears began to subside. "She's baith a slee and an uncannie kimmer," said Davie, "and maun be obeyed; but as she canna see through Airnespie hill I needna burst myself." And as he said this he slackened his pace. "Besides," he continued, "I'm no sure that I'm right in rinning—rinning! I'm no rinning, I'm ganging; weel then I'm no sure that I'm right doing a witch's errand, whether rinning or ganging, sae I'se stand still and consider it. Ye see, the case is this:—a witch says gang and bring horses and men and tows to help folk out of the sea, that are in nae dangèr o' drowning—weel then, I run her errand, and she raises a storm in consequence, and down comes help and plucks them out of the waves, and kimmer gets a' the glory on't—then it's clear that I raise the storm. Weel then, deil hae me if I gang the length of my foot; but stop, now,—setting the case that she raises the storm depending on my sense and spirit—I quote her words, as Dominie Milligan says—and folk are drowned, then am I clearly to blame, and the loss of life will be laid at poor Davie's door. Sae I'll off like the wind—I'm owre lang here—but let me as I rin make an useful resolve—ay, when I say I'll do a thing, to do't—it will save

me a world of trouble, and what is mair, thought —in which, for a' witch Nanse's opinion, I'm but indifferently gleg."

While Davie went on his errand, the breeze died utterly away, the sun set on the distant hills, the crows seemed heaped on the pine-tree tops, the cattle ran together in startled groups, and the sea-birds sat and screamed ; not one would go to its customary roosting-place. "I'm right," said Nanse Halberson ; "God pity these poor wretches, how they wave their hands ! Hark ! I hear their shouts. Bird and beast ken something dreadful impends—man alone laughs ; he will yell soon, if signs in heaven and on earth are to be believed."

The vessel came nearer the land, and approaching within gunshot of the promontory on which Morison and Corsbane stood, tacked gently, and veered away towards the landing-place, distant a short half-mile. The sea lay calm as a sleeping babe, the little air that breathed pushed the vessel on her way ; the mariners, but more particularly the followers of Lord Thomas, cheered repeatedly ; they crowded the deck, and seemed impatient of the brief time which separated them from their friends. Lord Thomas himself stood on the prow ; a young lady of

exquisite beauty was beside him ; he looked round once or twice to the sky, and said something to an old mariner, and waved his hand, impatiently. “ How beautifully she swims along ! ” said Morison ; “ and how many noble creatures that frail thing has the keeping of ! ”

“ Aye,” said Corsbane ; “ see, too, how many corded and iron-banded trunks she has sported on deck ; I have seen the day when as bold a prize as that, aye, and as rich, has been snatched at the very entrance of her haven, like a dove struck by the hawk at the door of the dove-cote. I say younker, when we sail eastward hoe ! I’ll show you a thing or two.”

He would have said more, but a whirlwind stooped down all at once on the vale ; it was limited in its career to a space not ~~an~~ hundred yards wide, and touching a tongue of land that shot far into the frith, and formed the bay, prostrated a grove of ancient pines like as much stubble, and descending on the sea, furrowed up the brine and whirling it round, threw it half a mile high into the air. The rushing sound and the unexpected sight did not rob the mariners of their presence of mind ; they were furling their sails and veering the ship when the devourer came up ; it seized on the vessel, and whirling

her round, dashed her into the agitated waves head foremost. One short thrilling cry of terror and agony was heard ; then all was hushed save the vehement tossing of the ocean, and nothing was seen save the fragments of the ship, scattered like foam on the wave, with here and there a drowning creature clinging to spar or wreck—or more fatal still—to each other. The whole people stood for a moment as if struck into stone ; they then rushed down to the bay ; some with proper presence of mind mounted horses, others without an aim ran wildly along, shouting continually. Morison rushed into the waves in a moment, regardless of shout and call—he first encountered a long line of agitated water, and breasted through it like a sea-fowl ; he met and braved a second with like success ; and in the third found the object for whom he had thus risked his life—a young lady ; the same he had seen by the side of Lord Thomas. She was floating as fair and as senseless as a water-lily ; no sooner did Morison raise her from the wave, and shed the long dripping tresses from her brow, than he touched it with his lips, and bore her towards the shore ; wave after wave following and overtaking him, as if enraged to be deprived of a prey so lovely.

With the whirlwind an almost total darkness came; and though the cloud was now and then lifted like a curtain from the bay, it did more to distract than to aid those, and they were many, who were plunging on horseback, on foot, and in boats to help the sufferers. A rush of horses was now heard, and the voice of Lord Roldan calling, “Is he saved—is Lord Thomas saved—where is my brother?” and spurring his horse as he spoke, he dashed fearlessly into the waves, which churned to foam, and heaped in multitudes on each other, leaped east and west, casting a salt spray far up the cliffs. He came too late: the five minutes which Davie wasted in self-controversy, had sufficed to work all the woe we have been so long in describing, and rendered Lord Roldan an idle sorrower. All was now over: the tide came in with a triumphant swell; but it was only to wash the dead ashore, and show how weak are all the efforts as well as hopes of man, when opposed to that dread destroyer the sea.

In the midst of this scene of distress some one plucked Lord Roldan by the sleeve, it was Captain Corsbane. “Here,” said he, “is something which the sea has unwillingly spared—she breathes and revives.”

Lord Roldan took the young and fainting creature out of the rough guardianship of Corsbane, committed her to the care of his own servants, aided by Nanse Halberson, and desired that she might be instantly conveyed to the castle. Morison, from whose arms the captain received her, had rushed back to the help of others; the sea, however, had spared none of all that gay company, and when he returned to the shore and sought for her whom he had, even in extreme peril, perceived to be the Lady Rose of the harvest-dance, he found but Captain Corsbane. That worthy accosted him with, “She’s ott damme!—flown away in her wet feathers—she was worth the plucking too, for she sported her mother’s best jewels.” He thrust one hand into his bosom, and with the other shaking Morison by the fingers hastened away, nor awaited further speeoh.

A thought akin to suspicion rushed upon the mind of Morison concerning the captain; he had observed something twinkle in the opening of that worthy’s vest, as he turned to begone. He darted after him like lightning, and the speed he exerted was necessary, for the captain was already descending the rugged pathway down the cliff to his boat, when Morison overtook him. “Captain

Corsbane," said Morison, "one word—the young lady—Rose Roldan, she whom I saved, has lost—dropped I should have said—some of the valuable trinkets to which you alluded."

"Well, and what then?" said the worthy of the sea, with perfect composure.

"Well," continued Morison, "bid me tell her that you have preserved them, and will deliver them to her when she recovers—I saw them glittering in your bosom."

Corsbane, when he first beheld Morison approach, felt for his pistols; but if his first emotion was hostile, he had now changed it—he smiled as he answered, "Why, aye, damme! I had forgot that. I did pick up two articles of female gear in the hurry—thank ye, lad, for reminding me. There they are." He put a pair of diamond bracelets into the other's hand, and added, "Don't be in such a hurry with your interrogatories next time, my young friend; and more, don't come to me with so much blood in your brow and fire in your eyes. I carry a brace of trinkets here that have sobered the looks of some fine impetuous fellows in their day."

"And I," said Morison, in the same tone, "carry a couple of ready friends here," pointing to his pistols—"and the powder is not wetted." So

saying, he waved good night to the captain, and vanished behind a cliff before that worthy could determine whether to continue to play the friend or put on the bully.

We left Lady Winifred seated on the top of the castle of Roldan ; though now waxing old her eyes were bright, and she could see clearly to a great distance. Her heart danced as she saw the ship which carried her long absent and best-beloved son rising with swelling canvass and pennons spread, out of the sea, nor did she remove her eyes from the bay, but sat in silence, and when any of her attendants uttered a word, she waved her hand impatiently, to intimate that she wished no vulgar joy to intrude on her silent delight. But as the vessel neared the port Lady Winifred seemed troubled, and the trouble evidently came from the sky. She looked on all sides : the air was quiet and in repose, and betokened nothing of the whirlwind which was so nigh. “Who is this ?” she cried when she beheld Davie running towards the castle. “If he has aught to say about Lord Thomas bring him here and that quickly.”

The messenger was conducted half breathless into the presence of Lady Winifred, and, with

some ado—for haste and awe impeded his utterance—he delivered his message.

“And who presumed to send you on such an errand?” exclaimed Lord Roldan.

“A witch,” replied Davie, briefly.

“A witch!” said Lord Roldan with a laugh. “Go back and tell her if there are no stakes and tar-barrels for impostors now, there are jouggs and scourges for leasing-making.”

Davie shrugged his shoulders and said dauntingly, “Some one else maun deliver these hard words to Nanse Halberson. I hae nae wish to be turned into a tinkler’s messan, and made to turn a spit in Purgatory.”

“Nanse Halberson?” said the Lady alarmed; “this is no jest; she sees what I have for this half-hour felt.—Haste, Lord Roldan, haste! else may a mother’s curse cling to you—haste to the bay and give thy brother help—for, O God and his saints! he is about to need it.”

Lord Roldan hurried to his horse and flew to the shore; the wind which had wrought its will in the bay, nigh seized him on the road; it passed so close, that it all but unseated him; it crushed in a moment the rising mills of the firm of Heddles, Treddles, Warp, Waft, and Company,

scattering the machinery like chaff;—smashed the trysting tree of Glengarnock—to the sorrow of many a fair face—and exhausted its fury on the falcon tower of Roldan, which it lifted from the summit of the ancient fortalice, and threw into a neighbouring linn, without so much as scattering a fragment on its way. Slowly, slowly, Lord Roldan returned from the bay; he was met by a messenger, who requested him to hasten; he had scarcely put spurs to his horse, ere another met him, and said, “Ride, my lord, ride, Lady Winifred seems in the dead throw!” The horse, urged by spur, by whip, and by word, cleared the ground, and Lord Roldan, scaling the stairs with the quickness of a bird, was in a moment at his mother’s side. She was still sitting in her chair, her hands were clasped over her breast as if in prayer; her eyes were fixed on the bay—she was dead! The attendants told that when she heard the ship was gone to pieces and all on board had perished, she clasped her hands on her bosom and her lips moved; nor did she alter her posture, till Rose Roldan, with her ringlets wet, and her face as pale as death, was half carried to her—she laid her hand on her head and said, “Bless thee!—bless thee! An

ancient name goes out in the land—goes out in darkness, and not in light as it came in."

There was grief both in cottage and hall for the sudden eclipse which the house of Roldan had suffered. The wrath of heaven was visible in it, but various were the causes to which that wrath was imputed; John Cargill, the Cameronian, beheld in it a judgment for the blood of the saints shed on the banks of the Elfin-burn, by the persecuting lord, where their gravestones are still to be seen. William Johnston, the seceder, said, it was for adherence to the scarlet church of erroneous Rome, after that godly man Simon Inglis had preached against its abominations. Others were willing to find it in the evil courses to which the two brothers had delivered themselves up: Jeanie Rabson of Howeboddom, and Dominie Milligan, averred, that it had happened, because Lord Roldan was a perjured person, and hinted that his own time was at hand. While not a few, and Nanse Halberson was of the number, averred that it was an accident in the course of nature, and that the Lord meant no particular harm to the Roldans more than to any other name, seeing that many a mother had lost her son, and many a wife her husband, in the

same ship, though no one made moan for them save their own relations. For this Nanse Halberson was called thrice over a witch and a doubter in a special Providence, at which the said Nanse laughed, and observed that all who thought God showed any spite in the matter were special fools.

On the morning which succeeded these disasters, Morison sought out Nanse, and putting the diamond bracelets into her hand, told her how he obtained them, and desired her to give them to the Lady Rose as soon as she well could ; for he felt uneasy lest she should imagine he had taken them from her person under pretence of saving her life.

“ The captain’s a kittle neighbour,” said Nanse ; “ and I can tell ye yere a bauld lad that dared to beard him as ye did : but dinna be uneasy ; Rose has a sort of consciousness that she was in rougher hands than yours when she was deprived of this gear. O, Morison, she’s a fine lass, and spoke sic things about ye ! O, but it happened ill, the auld lady’s decease : I had aye till now a sort of hope that she—that’s to say, when she kenned Morison Roldan as well as I do—would gar justice be done to his mother, which

was the same as doing justice to yersel ye ken. But that star's dropt frae the firmament of hope."

The brow of the young man darkened down as Nanse concluded her speech. "Some hope of the kind," he said, "now and then brightened within me; but it arose more from a belief in the sense of honour and justice in the heart and soul of Lord Roldan himself, than from any trust in the influence of his mother or my own slender merits."

"Weel, weel," said Nanse, "dinna despair; ye ken I aye prophesied fortune fair and lordly to you; not because I am a witch and sell favourable winds to such honourable persons as your friend Dick Corsbane; but because I am an observer of minds, and hearts, and oh! Morison, man, ye will use nature ill and neglect noble opportunities if ye dinna fulfil all that I have spaed. Sae, cheer up yere heart, since the power that's to lift ye up comes in defiance of rank and birth, and springs from the man alone. Cheer up, I say; I never heard of ony body sticking up in the world but ane, and that was Lot's wife." Morison smiled, and returned warmly her grasp of the hand. "Ae word mair," she said; "dinna just be ony oftener

amang the cliffs and caverns on the shore than what is necessary : the Captain takes queer notions in his head, carries pistols in his pocket, owns four faces, and a' fause anes, and has some rough comrades to help him. But I'm saying, what a scatterment the wind has made of the wheel within a wheel of Heddles, Treddles, Warp, Waft, and Company. My trouth ! but crazy Willie, of the Starryheugh, was right about 'the coming woe,' though erroneous about the agent."

and new work out in rapid order, and all the ruined
cabloft trees, & the fallen stones, & the ruined
machinery of old, were cleared away, so that
great numbers of trees, which had stood
long in the water, were felled, and a flat
level of ground was made, on which
the new wagons were to stand.

CHAPTER XII.

And wear thou this, she solemn said :
And bound the holly round my head ;
The polished leaves and berries red
Did rustling play :
And, like a passing thought, she fled
In light away.

BURNS.

BUT though the wheels and machinery of Heddles, Treddles, Warp, Waft, and Company, were scattered by the winds of heaven, and though the Elfin burn, asserting its natural rights, and sweeping away all the new embankments, had returned once more to the crooked courses from which it was reclaimed ; yet such was the fortitude of industry, that the embankments were recommenced on a more abiding principle, and the mills resumed on a more stable plan, and the whole promised by the middle of autumn to establish that golden age of which the foundations were laid by science, and the whole matured by talent. It was otherwise with the

house of Roldan: the hope of the name was lost when Lord Thomas died, and Lord Roldan alone, whom none loved, was left to maintain it. About the birth of Lady Rose a mystery hung, which it was believed none living could or was willing to clear; the peasantry, who loved her for her hard fortune chiefly, for they seldom saw her, always spoke of her as the poor lassie of Roldan, or the sweet maiden Rose; but few ventured to call her lady since Nickie Neevison was rebuked by Lady Winifred, and told that titles put foolish notions in the heads of young creatures. Some ventured even to say, that "since nae better might be, it would be a good thing if Morison and Rose could make a buckle on't, for where was the harm? Naebody kenned whether they were sib or no, and it was clear they were the last of the race, for not a drop of the blude was kenned to run in other veins." It seemed clear to the peasantry that the house of Roldan was to be extinguished, and its doom was in every one's mouth.

The head of the firm of Heddles, Treddles, Warp, Waft, and Company, alone sought to cheer and comfort the public mind. "Wherefore all this lamentation?" said Hugh; "a new era has arisen, and old dynasties are dying out. Flesh and blood

are frail things ; the old house of Douglas is to be found but in an old song ; the house of Maxwell has lost the rooftree ; the house of Kirkpatrick, like Willie Watson's thornbush, if it has gone little back, it has gone as little forward ;—and here's the house of Roldan, a puff of wind and a wave of the sea, have turned it tapsel-teerie. But look at our house—the house I mean of Heddles, Treddles, Warp, Waft, and Company ; it has been preached against ; madmen have risen against it at midnight ; nay, the wind which demolished the house of Roldan has done small harm to me, for look and behold we are founded in science and philosophy, and are rising more vigorous from our overthrow. We will soon be as lords in the land, so dry your tears and compose your looks ; and, moreover, we will be lords by sea as well as by land ; we have a vessel preparing to swim against the will of the wind and tide, and run up the rivers as well as down them. Rejoice, therefore ; all that is old will be removed or recast in a new spirit and the whole earth will be united in one vast bond of science and philosophy."

" It's really grand," said Niekie Neevison, " to hear yon saulless body preach about the golden age of wheels, and reels, and machines,

and steam-barges ; but his idol is Mammon, and he cares nae mair for God's image than he cares for the trinnel of a wheelbarrow."

Morison had much to think on, and little to do ; all the books in Glengarnock he had half learned by heart ; had mastered all he had attempted, and it was believed he could carry matters no farther, till deeper scholars than Dominie Milligan took him up at college. He was not, however, idle—he could not for his soul be idle ; yet the verses which he composed but to burn, and the prose characters of men which he drew but to tear in pieces, did any thing but satisfy an ambition, that raged like an imprisoned demon for a vent to get out at. The scorn heaped upon him by Mattie Anderson, had checked his spirit for love adventure,—his pride rose and protected him against further humiliation, and though he had met her several times at dances and festivals, he spoke to her just as he had always done save on one memorable night. His own condition had in truth begun to occupy his whole attention, and he walked but to think, and slept but to dream of his future lot. Sometimes he half regretted that his sternness with Corshane

hindered him from trying a voyage or two with that worthy; for he had but a faint suspicion and no more, of his real character, and never regarded him as a pirate, a kidnapper, and a murderer;—and Captain Corsbane was them all.

His mother thought Morison demented—“No but he is kind—O aboon a’ measure kind to me,” she said in confidence to Jeanie Rabson, “but he wanders, d’ye ken, lass, at night by himself; the mair bogly the bits the better for him; and whiles he asks me anent the spirit which appears in the first night of the full moon, of July, to all who are of the house of Roldan, and whether they maun bide all night—God have a care on us!—in the Ladye Chapel, and await its time. But waur nor a’, I doubt he has taken to the writing of verses—O Jeanie, woman, the true bitterness of my lot was never felt till now; to think that my bairn is turning a ballad-maker, and a blackguard, is mair than my heart can haud. He ay burns his rhymes, sae he’s no wholly hardened yet, and there’s hope.”

“Hope! baubles!” said Jeanie Rabson, “what the waur is he, but something the better, of being able to write poetry;—d’ye no ken that sweet story the Gentle Shepherd; and d’ye no ken

Ross's Hellenore ; I read them whiles sae late on a Saturday e'en, that I daurna look the clock for fear it should turn out Sunday."

" O Jeanie, and is that poetry !—then atweel I have nae objection to Morison's writing poetry, for I'm unco pleased with these books myself."

" I'll talk to him about this and other things," said the heiress.

The night on which this conversation happened was one of the loveliest of the closing month of summer, and when Morison came home, he found Jeanie Rabson standing with his mother at the gorge of the glen, in the act of parting. " Ye're weel come, lad," said the heiress of Howeboddom, " for I was just thinking of asking the head of the firm of Heddles, Treddles, Warp, Waft, and Company, to set me hame in a philosophic and scientific way." So saying, she took his arm, and turned her face homewards, with a slow step. When she got from among the roans of bushes which fringed the glen, and saw nothing around but the plain brae side, the heiress began to speak. " Morison," she said, " ye are maist a man now, and as ye can save a lass frae drowning—scorn ane wha scorns you, and chase a saucy fellow and lend him a lounder—aye ye needna look

that queer gate, for it's a' true, it came to me frae a sure hand, and I like ye the better for't—but I was gaun to say that ye are maist a man now, and nae doubt anxious about yere way-gate in the world. I ance, d'ye ken, entered into Mary's views about the ministry—but dinna jump away now—there's owre mickle of the Roldan blude about ye for that—ye wad be looking mair at the rosie part of the parishioners, than at the bearings o' the text. Now we have thought, ye see, as there's nae nearer heirs to the Rabson's of Howeboddom than that feckless winnelstrae saulless bodie of Cowplat, and as neither his —James's I mean—marriage nor mine will interfere, it wad be a rest and repose to our minds to hae the thing settled—we have resolved, therefore, to make our own bairn, Morison, laird of Howeboddom—but I'm saying, lad, we winna let it spunk out just yet, else a' the weelfaured giglet gawpies from Lochmaben to the Mull will be setting their caps at the young laird—that is to be, of Howeboddom."

Morison wist not well what to say—at last he stammered out—for his heart was at his lips, and ~~the~~ the tears in his eyes—"It is like you, Jeanie, and it is like your brother—but I cannot

accept such a gift—my heart is set on far lands and more stirring scenes than this—where I shall either make a name, or return no more."

"Weel, weel!" said Jeanie Rabson, "I am na averse to your sojourning for a time in foreign lands; though mony's the fair face that gangs out and never returns; Howebooddom winna rin awa, and in our hands it will be ay growing better. I kenned weel enough you would be for pushing your fortune; I hae lang observed ye looking beyond Glengarnock hills. But when do ye think of ganging, Morison; and whare d'ye think of ganging, and what in the wide world do you intend to do?"

Morison answered, "I care not whither I go, east or west, or north or south—and as for what I'll do, if nougnt better chances, I shall e'en offer myself to some poor people whom the kings and nobles of the earth oppress—there are such in the world—and die or live with them;—Who cares for such a creature as Morison Roldan, the poor bastard boy?"

"I care for ye, Morison, and James Rabson cares for ye, and your mother cares for ye—and aboon a' God cares for ye, and ye will forget him when ye cast your young life awa in the daft gate ye talk of. Na, na! that mauna be."

“ It must be, Jeanie,” exclaimed Morison ; “ I cannot dwell in the land where my birth is a continual reproach. When I perilled my own life to redeem yon lovely creature from the sea, what a clapping of hands there would have been had it been performed by any one else—nay, I think as her sense returned, she looked on me as if she was even sorry to have her life saved by such hands. Even Mattie of Fourmerkland, whose whole soul is in a sows-lug purse, made my birth a matter of scorn.”

The heiress smiled and said, “ It sets Mattie Anderson weel to gie hersel airs : her father herded the hirsel of Howeboddom, and made his plack a bawbee, and no sae fairly neither—and her a black smout of a thing ; walks intaed and has a beard—I wonder what ye see about her !”

To this Morison answered, “ I think, however, that to look about me in another land for a year or two would be beneficial. But, Jeanie, there’s ae thing I have made up my mind about, and that is, not even to step in between that sackless, soulless sumph of Cowplat and Howeboddom. I have been robbed of my own proper inheritance of unstained birthright, and I shall never if I can help it, wrong others out of theirs.”

“Heigh-ho!” said Jeanie, “there’s nae robbing in the matter—Howeboddom shall gang to the poor—it shall endow a house and a hame for the helpless mad, and the sackless insane, before it gangs to Cowplat. Besides, the thing’s a’ settled ; fairly down in black and white ; signed and sealed as the saying is. Jean Rabson,”—and she withdrew her arm from Morison’s, and stood an inch taller ;—“Jean Rabson never says ae thing and does another—when she says hae she means hae. But, my bairn,” and she placed her hand on his, and looked kindly in his face ;” just whisper to me when ye are minded to gang abroad, and I hae some siller which even our James disnae ken of, which will be better in your pouch than in a hole of the wa’, and may be useful even in foreign parts. But, O Morison ! do naething rashly.”—On this they parted ; Jeanie returned to Howeboddom, and Morison turned his face to the Elfin-glen.

He turned his face homewards—his thoughts dwelt on his own condition, and on his probable lot in life. He fell into a fit of musing ; he crossed in fancy stormy seas ; he braved perils on land and water ; he saw strange countries and splendid cities rising before him—but all his visions ended in strife and bloodshed. Whereso-

ever he went, his fancy supplied the very wind with a tongue to hollo bastard in his ear; and wherever he looked, he saw fierce looks and opposing hands. He was awoke—for we may safely call such reveries dreaming—by the startled cry of an owl, and pausing and looking, he found himself a full mile out of his way home, and almost within the shadow of the Ladye Chapel. “It is strange,” he said, “on going a road of my own choosing, and to keep tryst with Mattie Anderson—black smout she may be, but Jeanie was dreaming about the beard—heaven and earth, land and water, seemed up in arms to oppose me; nay, a rival’s envy was pushed into my path.—And now, in this road, which I never dreamed of, not only do all the stars smile, and the winds consent, and the air allure with its balminess, but I am kept in a sort of mental delirium, and know not where I am wandering till the haunted chapel rises before me. There seems to be a meaning—a providence in this. I shall at least disabuse my fancy of an impression which it has received. This, too, is the fated time: the first night of the full moon of July.—I shall call on the Spirit, which legends say abides within these holy walls, and as a Roldan, though a bastard one, ask it what my fate is to be:—if it be silent and

refuse to show itself, I shall proclaim the legend a lie, and the Ladye Spirit a figure of the imagination, and put faith in nought but reason and resolution." Having half thought and half uttered these sentiments he entered the ruin.

It might be ten o'clock: the place was lonesome; the woods which enclosed it were gloomy; some of the trees hoary, and dropping to pieces from extreme age; while here and there thick, and at the same time lofty groves, or rather bowers of holly, with polished leaves and ruddy berries, glittered to the stars, and seemed to hem it in with a natural wall. The chapel itself rose high above the trees and was still an elegant ruin; the marks of the besiegers in two hurried border raids were visible on the south side, where a mount had been thrown up against it, and artillery placed; but the firebrand of Reformation had fallen on its roof, and consuming all that could be consumed, left it to the tender mercies of a zealous and illiterate mob, who mistaking Jesus Christ for Judas Iscariot; and St. Andrew and St. Allan, the patron saints of the house of Roldan, for the two thieves, smashed them to pieces. Nor did a Virgin Mary, whom they mistook for the lady of Babylon, fare any better; in short, the hammer of the congregation was laid upon all

that bore the aspect of man, or appeared in the shape of beast ; and nothing escaped save the massive walls, whose solid construction set at nought the hasty impulse of zeal under which tenderer matters were crushed like the flower beneath the furrow.

All around and between the chapel and the greenwood a continuous sward, nibbled close by sheep, and soft as velvet, extended, save on the eastern side, which was occupied by a stream, in other places shallow, and of small volume ; but here deep and broad, and calm and clear as a looking-glass ; the chapel, the woods, and all stable things, including a few stars, were brightly imaged out. The extreme beauty and extreme loneliness of the place—for it stood within the policies of the castle—were felt strongly by Morison, who having made a circuit or two round the walls, entered the chapel—not without additional reverence in his step, and an increase of awe at heart. The rubbish had been removed ; the greensward had crept in from the outside and extended itself like a carpet over the whole floor, while several flowering shrubs rooting themselves in the jointed stones, threw down their tassels and tendrils till they approached the ground ; gravestones—and the full-length figures

of recumbent warriors—but broken and defaced, were placed against the wall, but so as not to obstruct the entrances to two or three little cells or chambers which were partly wrought out of the solid wall, and partly projected into the interior, masked and surmounted by carved screens of the richest Gothic workmanship.

Morison seated himself on a broken font: he looked at the starlight, for the moon was unrisen, glimmering through the fractured shafts of the windows; at some dozen or so of stars swimming in tranquil beauty, apparently rather in the clear air than in the blue sky above the shattered roof; and he listened to each sound, whether of the greenwood or of the stream, which gave a momentary voice to the tranquillity of the night. He could not help saying to himself that other sights had been witnessed by the stars on the spot where he sat than ruins worthy only of the bat and the owl; and that other sounds than the murmur of the brook had been heard by those of his name when they knelt at the altar; and hung their banners up after battle or tournament. As he continued to sit and muse, the gentle sounds of the night and the quiet glory of the air and sky became more audible and visible; the cry of the owl from the ivy bower; the voice

of the fox on the shaggy hill ; the streamlet of his native glen, dropping from rock to rock, and from linn to linn ; and, the motion of the mouse over the velvet sward, with its cry scarcely more distinct than the rustle of its feet, were all in his ear by turns ; nay, he imagined the ticking of his watch was louder than usual, and that he heard his pulse beat. He shut his eyes for a minute or so, and when he opened them he thought the splendour of the night increased ; he stopt his ears, and when he removed his fingers he imagined that the voice of the stream was louder ; but when a star shot brightly along the sky and seemed to drop on the Ladye Chapel, he thought he heard its sough in the air ; it came also across his mind, that if earth held aught unearthly, now was the time for its appearance. These preparations on the part of nature, however, ushered in nothing, and Morison watched till his sight grew not only weary but dim : he leaned against the wall, and closing his eyes, indulged himself with a mental vision, since it seemed he was not to be honoured with a real one. With the stars above his head and the night-dews under his feet, Morison mused on the Spirit, which tradition gave to the Ladye Chapel, and on Lady Rose with the long locks and the bright eyes, whom he rescued from

the wreck. He hesitated to believe that amid the tranquil beauty of such a scene the Spirit would appear, but wished in his heart that some hand, he cared not whether of this world or the next, would lift the dark cloud from the future ;—he dared the Spirit of the place to show itself.

When afterwards relating his dream or vision, Morison at this place made a pause, and intimated that the conclusion of the scene seemed to partake of both worlds. That it was wholly real he could not believe ; that it was altogether visionary he felt it impossible to persuade himself, since he had substantial tokens to the contrary. In truth, he considered it part real and part imaginary, and that actual events were mingled wondrously with a sleeper's dream.

He heard as he dared the Spirit to show itself, a sound resembling the rustling of silks and the rushing of wings, mingled with whispering tongues, in which he imagined his own name was named. The air grew calm in a moment, and breathed of dew and balm ; an approaching light, like the radiance of a star, sparkled along the floor, and glimmered upon the walls around. While he sat wondering, a female form, with a wreath of flowers in her left hand and a sword in her right, entered the ruin, and at once walked up

to him. She was of great beauty : her feet though bare, were jewelled, for they twinkled as she walked, and her locks, though long and unbound, seemed fixed to her neck and shoulders by some invisible means—while the wind waved them they shone and sparkled as if sown with diamonds. Her dress was wholly white and reached from her neck below her knees. She looked full in Morison's face, exhibiting the wreath and sword, and appeared desirous to be spoken to; but awe and something else kept him silent, for his visitant seemed now of this world and now of the other, and sometimes of both. At one moment he was about to address her as the Lady Rose, for a smile glanced over her features which reminded him of the dance in which she was his partner—in another moment he felt disposed to fly from her presence, so much did she seem a Spirit.

At last she spoke: the voice was gentle but commanding. “ Morison Roldan,” she said, “ why are you here—why do you abide in a land where the words of the meanest churl pain you—whose sons call you base-born, and whose daughters think it a reproach to be seen with you in the dance, or under the trysting-tree? Your destiny calls you elsewhere—go ! be seen

in this land no more till your name and fame are such that your native place shall welcome you back even as June welcomes her roses. Abide, and woe awaits you ; woe, which will come upon you as a blast of evil wind when it blights the flower in the field—as the breath of the elf that blights the babe on the mother's knee." She had spoken thus far, when heavy steps and the rustling of the holly-boughs intimated the approach of more than one person. She held up her finger, dropt the sword at his feet, and vanished.

Morison started up, and was about to follow, when two figures suddenly entered the ruin, whom he at once perceived to be Lord Roldan and Captain Corsbane. He stept back, withdrew silently into the crypt, from which a stair ascended to the summit of the ruin, and with one foot on the first step listened to their conversation, adjusting at the same time his pistols, which he carried with him on all his excursions, and holding the sword, the gift of the Spirit, in his hand. It was as well he listened, for the conversation concerned him nearly.

" You surprise me ! " said Lord Roldan. " Where can the boy have acquired all this

knowledge—and above all, who has taught him, and for what purpose has he learned, such exercises?"

"How am I to know?" said the captain, "I live, you know, on sea and Morison dwells on land? But, that he has acquired them, is certain. Gad! I did but say something to him about the necessity of a knowledge of his weapon if he desired to prosper on salt water, when out he whips a pistol, and damme! at five-and-twenty paces, knocked the head off a sea-hawk with a single ball, else may I never more snap flint over powder."

"Well," replied Lord Roldan, "he takes after his race. But you know how much I have been harassed about this boy: the rude clouterly sons of the sheepfold and the furrow cannot pass without insulting me either about his mother or himself.—'You are a base person,' cries one; 'for Mary Morison was better and bonnier than the worthiest of your kin.' 'And you are but a cruel lord and a cursed fool,' cries a second; 'for there's no such a lad for beauty and talent in the south countrie as poor Morison Roldan.' And it was but this morning that a foul old woman—folk more foolish than herself believe her to be a witch,—

told me boldly to my face that I should live to weep tears of blood and utter sighs that would scald me, for not at once owning, as she called it, my marriage with his mother, and making him the heir of my land and name."

Captain Corsbane hitched up his cutlass-belt took a stride or two across the floor, and then said, "So Nanse is in the song, too? Then damme if I know what to say about it! She mayn't be such a witch as Mother Carey, who sold her carrion sea-fowl for barn-door chickens; nor yet so far ben with old Lucifer as Dame Heckles, of Lapland, from whom we could not only buy a blasted good wind, but success in battle too! No: Nanse mayn't be altogether a witch, but damme if I feel any inclination to cross her! Didn't she foresee the storm that laid Lord Thomas in the hollow of Glengarnock bay? And didn't she prophesy—and a cursed long yarn she made of it—didn't she prophesy that I should get more cuffs than crusadoes if I ventured into the Spanish Main? If Nanse be in the song, I know not what to say."

"But I know," said Lord Roldan, "what to do as well as what to say. I will ensure you for a groat against all the storms that Nanse can raise: so you must even perform this little bit of work for me.

I tell you that it will aid me much, and make your own fortune. You have only to carry him west for a year or so.

“Aye, aye,” said the captain ; “it is easy to carry, but we must catch him first ;—catch ! I tell you what ; it must be done warily, else some of us will be floored. I wish you had but seen the audacious whelp when he followed me, and demanded the trinkets which he said I had forgotten—aye ! ‘forgotten’ was his word—to restore to the young lady, your Rose Roldan, you know. Gad ! when I bent my brow and touched my belt, he smiled, and pointing with his finger, said, ‘My pistols are at hand, too, and the powder is not wetted.’ Some of us will be dished : get our broth, damme !”

The speech was interrupted by Lord Roldan, who put a purse of gold into the corsair’s hand so far exceeding his hopes, that his tone was instantly changed. “After all,” he said, “the boy is a fine boy, and has some maritime taste—five hundred, my lord, is not too much though for the job. I love him, too, because of the spice of the devil, or the house of Roldan—no offence—in his nature ; you must make it seven hundred if I dispose of him judiciously. Gad !

it's a pleasure to have such a commodity of air and fire on hand ; he will be a credit to me in the market; but I tell you again there's risk in it."

During this speech, Lord Roldan listened and looked anxiously around, and signing to Corsbane, pointed to the crypt in which Morison was concealed. The captain turned towards the door, continuing still to speak, unsheathing at the same time his hanger ; and just when he said, "there's risk in it"—words which he uttered loudly, he reached the recess at a bound, exclaiming, "Yo ho, friend, have I found you!" But a mind so prompt and a foot so active were not to be surprised. Morison was a dozen steps in advance even before Corsbane reached the foot of the stair ; he ascended with the swiftness of a bird, and reaching a window some twenty feet from the lawn, leaped at once upon the greensward, and dashing into one of the winding glades, made for the Elfin-glen with something of the careless speed of the swallow, which, though hunted by a hawk, seems more to amuse itself in the air than put forth the full force of its wings.

On reaching the brook which ran southward from the ruin, Morison paused, and looking back, saw Lord Roldan on the top of the

wall motioning with his hand to some one on the ground below. "Let him come," Morison muttered, and examined his pistols; "my aim is as sure by the moon—thanks to thee, fair planet, for rising—as it is by the sun. But not amid these treacherous hollies shall I jeopard myself; let him meet me on the bare plain if he dares!" As he said this he started away; for the muttered curse, as well as the crashing bough, told that Corsbane was at hand.

A deep and thickly-wooded glen now interposed, and into this Morison precipitated himself with the alacrity of one to whom each tree, and cavern, and nook was familiar. Often had he sought hind-berries, and nuts, and birds'-nests in its banks and thickets; and groped trouts for his mother's dinner as well as his own in the little basins and pools. All this and more flashed on him as he threaded at full speed its thickets; he thought on his mother's wrongs and on his own; he reflected on the insults to which he was exposed from the base and vulgar-minded; and he had heard to-night with horror, that his own father desired to be rid of him, nor hesitated about the means. He slackened his pace; he was working his heart into a hard-

ness suitable to the shedding of blood ; and as he emerged from the glen and stood on the plain upland, he said, “ Not another foot shall I fly for all the sons of men—nay, for all the fiends in hell.” As he said this he took out his pistols, turned their locks to the moon, examined the priming, and stamping on the ground, exclaimed, “ Two may meet—one only shall go away !”

As he spoke, he looked to the ground, and saw with deep emotion that he was standing on the gravestone of one of the martyrs slain, nay murdered in other days for conscience-sake ; nor did it lessen the throbbing of his heart when he reflected that the humble peasant who slept in dust below, was shot down by the hand of his own ancestor in the act of prayer, and that the inscription echoed but the voice of the country, in calling for vengeance on the house of his destroyer. Morison stept reverently from the stone, and gazing around him said, “ Who has authorized me to come here and shed blood ?—The martyr fell in the cause of Christ—in the vindication of the truth—in defence of religious freedom ; if I fall, it is in revenge of worldly wrongs—not here, not here, must such a thing be ;”

and he retired a hundred paces or so, and again stood still. He awaited his adversary in vain ; Captain Corsbane had no desire to overtake, let alone to face his young foe, and he but followed him down the glen, to show that he was zealous, and moreover to ascertain for himself, who was the hearkener of their plot. This he made out without personal risk : on reaching the gorge of the glen, he slipt into a thicket, and thence, by the light of the moon, now risen clear and brilliant, he saw Morison stand on the martyr's stone, and was so near, that he heard some of his exclamations ; but all this he resolved to keep to himself.

“ You might as well follow three ell of wind,” said Corsbane, half breathless, when he returned to the Ladye Chapel, “ and hope to overtake it, as pursue such a will o' wisp. New face—don't know him: gad he moved like a shadow—damme ! like a spirit—are there such things about this place my lord ?” without waiting for an answer, he grumbled into his cravat—“ But never mind ! your damned clever chaps are always the easiest done ; a fellow with a head as thick as a bombshell—a mere ass, who cannot keep the worms from the kale, will outwit and baffle one, while your clever fellow

believes in his own wisdom, and swallows like a shark the rancid bacon, damme ! rusty hook and all."

" Well, well," said Lord Roldan, " let it pass; but to resume the matter ! Mind, do the boy no wrong—harm not a hair of his head—land him in Hispaniola—set him free; give him this purse, and let fortune work her will with him ;—fail in this, and face me if you dare ! You had better leave upper air at once, than seek to deceive me—I have said enough."

" I know you well, my lord," said Corsbane gruffly, " and that it's not safe to cross your will—as this poor lad, damme ! can testify ; but I'll bide by bargain ; no man, nor lord neither, could ever say that Dick Corsbane broke his word. It's not the first time I have ventured on a losing bargain though ;—and let me tell you ! but for the saucy boldness of this bastard braggart—nay I meant no harm—damme ! if I had undertaken this neat bit of business after all." Here they parted, and Corsbane returned to Glengarnock-bay, revolving in his own mind how he should entrap Morison, of whose courage and promptitude of soul, he had some dread. " It could easily be done, damme," he growled, " but the eavesdropping bastard, no doubt heard much that

passed between his worthy father and me, and will be as wild to lure, as a bird in summer. I wish after all, that I could but win him over to myself; a raw haspan of a callan, and so cursedly clever, so up to every thing—what will he be when he's a man? But damme, that won't do! Dick Corsbane, that cock wont fight. He'll win the men's hearts from me, and take my bonnie Wildfire to himself.—Aye, aye, I must stick by the original plan."

The reflections of Lord Roldan were in another mood. He thought on earlier days; on the merits of Mary Morison; nor did he hesitate to do justice to the worth, as well as looks of the boy whom he had neglected and wronged. But he had wooed and won a lady in another land, and desired to be freed from the reproach of the presence of Morison. As lady Winifred was gone, and Lord Thomas had perished, he was now sole representative of the name; in the prime of life, and his bride young, he despaired not of heirs; and already saw, in fancy, a long line of descendants and the glory of his name revived in the land. These were matters concealed within his own breast; he shared such secrets with no one, and full of hope, he appeared with a smiling face, and had a kind word to all, and the people of

the vale were heard to say, "The deil's no sae ill as he's ca'd—there's hope for Satan, yet, since adversity has mended the nature of Lord Roldan."

END OF VOL. I.

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